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ABSTRACT

This project described methods of early identification and implementation of various interventions used to increase achievement of students at risk in grades three, four, and five at John D. Floyd Elementary School in Spring Hill, Florida. The 51 children who qualified for and were enrolled in the dropout prevention program had achievement scores below national and state norms. Possible causes of the low achievement scores included poor attendance, retention, inconsistent time on task, inappropriate teaching strategies, large class size, inadequate material, nonsequenced curriculum, and unstructured computer instructional time. Individual education plans were designed for children and interventions included curriculum revision, specific teaching strategies related to individual needs, increased use of technology and manipulatives to reinforce instruction, positive reinforcement of lessons, consistent disciplinary practices with rewards, and guidance activities to develop self-image. After implementation of the program the achievement scores of the targeted students increased. Eleven appendixes provide copies of: (1) suggested criteria for identification of students; (2) additional criteria; (3) an alternative program statement of eligibility; (4) an opportunity matrix; (5) a parent current status survey; (6) a teacher survey; (7) a parent evaluation survey; (8) a dropout prevention program checklist; (9) a student behavior contract; (10) a program statement of eligibility; and (11) student assessment results. Contains 31 references. (MDM)

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ED 363 402

Early Identification and Interventions for Elementary Students at Risk of Not Succeeding in School

by

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A Major Applied Research Project Report
presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Education

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Abstract

Early Identification and Interventions for Elementary Students
at Risk of Not Succeeding in School

This project describes methods of early identification and implementation of various interventions used to increase achievement of students at risk in grades three, four, and five at John D. Floyd Elementary School, Spring Hill, Florida. The 51 children who qualified and were enrolled in the dropout prevention program had achievement scores below national and state norms as documented on the 1987-1990 test results and/or displayed disinterest in school. Possible causes of the low achievement scores included poor attendance, retention, social promotion, inconsistent time on task, various inappropriate teaching strategies, large class size, inadequate material, nonsequenced curriculum, and unstructured computer instructional time.

A review of the literature and interviews with educators directly involved with students at risk indicated that early identification of students who displayed characteristics associated with unsuccessful school experiences was needed in order to begin corrective strategies. Individual Education Plans were designed for children and interventions included: a) curriculum revision; b) specific teaching strategies related to individual needs; c) increased use of technology and manipulatives to reinforce instruction; d) positive reinforcement of lessons; e) consistent disciplinary practices with rewards; and f) guidance activities to develop self-image.

Terminal objectives focused on teacher training, parent education, and academic achievement. Teachers were given instruction in learning modalities, communication skills, and whole language teaching strategies. Individual Education Plans reflected the teachers' incorporation of the training modules. Academic achievement was documented for the purpose of comparison. Parents were encouraged to participate in the classroom and become supporters of their child's education by volunteering in the classroom. Academic achievement was the ultimate goal, but the attitude of the student was a major determining factor of success. Specific results were that achievement scores of targeted students increased.

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Chapter 1

Problem Statement and Community Background

General statement of problem

Fifty-one third, fourth, and fifth grade students at John D. Floyd Elementary School were identified as at risk of not completing their kindergarten through high school education in 13 years. These students, who have difficulty succeeding in early grades, were potentially at risk of experiencing educational problems throughout their public school career. More importantly, a child retained once in school has a 22% chance of completing high school (Shepard, 1989).

Nationwide, recent focus has been on those students who, for one reason or another, do not complete 13 years of schooling. The National Center of Education Statistics Analysis (1988) stated dropout rates in the United States have, in fact, declined from 6.6% in 1978, to 4.4% in 1988. In spite of the decrease, the dropout rate is still considered high and of great concern to both the taxpayers and educators. While there are numerous reasons for the high dropout rate, lower socioeconomic and minority status of students are most commonly cited as contributing factors. Due to the changing family structure in our society, there are more and more children being raised in single-parent homes. Single parents generally have more fiscal constraints and less quality time to spend with their children; therefore, they cannot provide necessary experiences for kindergarten readiness.

Indicators such as family status, socioeconomic status, parents'/siblings' level of education, parents' value of education, parents' occupation, students'

motivation and aspiration, social contact, mental and physical health, material possessions, community activities, failures in school, reading and mathematics progress, attendance, teacher expectations, and personality rating are possible means of identification of students at risk . A child who falls into one or more of these categories may be at risk of not graduating on time (Howard & Anderson, 1978).

The State of Florida adopted the concept of dropout prevention programs which were authorized by the Dropout Prevention Act of 1986 (FS 230.2316, 1986). The established comprehensive dropout prevention programs were designed to meet the needs of students who were not successful in the regular school setting by providing educational alternatives.

In response to the law and in an effort to reduce dropout rates, Hernandc County, Florida, adopted a Board policy which addressed students at risk (1987). To comply with this policy in the elementary schools, alternative classes were established as one of the solutions to the dropout dilemma.

Targeted students at John D. Floyd Elementary School were assigned to dropout prevention classrooms for the 1990-1991 school year. The program adopted by Hernando County provided for a transitional third-grade class, and fourth- and fifth-grade Alternative Studies to Regular Studies (ASTROS) classrooms. The students were selected for these classrooms on the basis of teacher recommendations, academic performance, and behavior. Since these students were not experiencing academic success, they may have also displayed inappropriate coping skills and poor attitudes. Parents appeared to have had little knowledge of these programs and asked many questions when

the parent conferences were held for initial child placement in the class. The teachers to whom the students at risk were assigned had little input in developing the selection criteria and process.

Although the guidance counselor, curriculum specialist, and principal came to a consensus in the identification of students to be placed in the first classrooms for students at risk, there were no established, acceptable criteria on which to base decisions for the assignment of these students. During interviews with the three teachers assigned to the dropout prevention at Floyd, they all stated that a more objective identification process was desired. This project addressed these needs.

Description of immediate problem context

Hernando County, with a school population of 12,500, is one of the fastest growing counties in Florida. There are nine elementary, three middle, and three high schools. The central office building houses the elected superintendent, one administrative assistant, two assistant superintendents, and various directors and supervisors responsible for the instructional and operational areas of the system. Each school has a principal in charge of enforcing Board policies. These schools are strategically placed within the county.

When John D. Floyd Elementary School first opened in 1986 there were 700 students in the attendance zone. The school grew by 25% each year thereafter. By the 1989-1990 school year, the enrollment was 1,257. Another elementary school was built and 350 students were reassigned to the new school. In the 1990-1991 school year, John D. Floyd Elementary School had

960 students registered in kindergarten through fifth grade. The student population is 95% White, and 5% Black and other racial/ethnic groups. Twenty-two percent qualify for free- or reduced-price lunch programs. The school is the largest elementary school of nine in the small, rural county of Hernando, Florida. There is a 20% annual population mobility rate and a 15% estimated growth rate each year within the Floyd School boundary lines.

School administration consists of one full-time principal and a part-time teacher given a supplement to take responsibility in the absence of the principal and to assist in administrative duties. The faculty and staff are comprised of 34 classroom teachers, 7 special area teachers, 2 guidance counselors, 3 exceptional education teachers, 3 dropout prevention teachers, and a curriculum specialist. There are 13 aides including a media aide, in-school suspension aide, and 2 dropout prevention aides. Class sizes range from 26 to 30 students; however, the transitional third grade is capped at 15, and the fourth and fifth grade alternative education classes are capped at 18. Actual instruction time is five and one-half hours per day.

The writer is the principal of John D. Floyd Elementary School. She was assigned to the new elementary school at its inception. The principal and staff worked closely with the architects and contractors to ensure the best design for the school's mission statement and philosophy. This philosophy was based on part of Glasser's Schools Without Failure (1974).

The principal of the school is responsible for the following with respect to the alternative program:

1. The recruiting, selecting, hiring, and assigning of the teachers of children at risk.

2. The allocation of funds for classroom supplies and approval of those purchases selected by the teachers.

3. The purchasing of supplies and materials needed for a basic program.

4. The purchasing of necessary textbooks and supplemental books for the program.

5. The overseeing of the assignments of the students in the designated classrooms.

6. The responsibility of taking an active part in the Child Study team meetings where these children are discussed with key team personnel. The personnel include the guidance counselor, teacher of students at risk, classroom teacher, speech and language therapist, curriculum specialist, school social worker, school psychologist, and exceptional education teacher.

7. The providing for the inservice of classroom and teachers of children at risk.

8. The evaluation of the personnel and program at least annually.

9. The reporting of student data to the proper departments.

Presently, the Director of Special Programs is assigned the responsibility for supervising the dropout prevention program as adopted by the Board. There are 12 alternative teachers and 9 transitional teachers allocated to the elementary school program countywide. The building principal is responsible for hiring, supervising, evaluating, and dismissal of the teachers at that particular school. The curriculum is developed and implemented by the teachers and principal with little input from the county level. The principal has the latitude to make curriculum changes within policies and allocate budget approved expenses under county level scrutiny. A budget of approximately $300.00 per teacher for supplies and supplemental texts is

suggested but not mandated. These are budget items listed under basic funding in the school budget.

Assignment procedures for students at risk after 1990, require a parent signature to accept the service. Students identified by informal recommendations by the classroom teacher, guidance counselor, and a curriculum specialist are placed in the program. The county's at-risk criteria is not strictly followed and is left up to individuals at the school site.

The guidance staff provides support and programs emphasizing self-esteem and coping skills in a six session block offered on a regular basis. The guidance curriculum is not structured but geared to solving classroom problems as they arise throughout the year. Alternative education students are on a regular school day schedule. The curriculum frameworks for alternative education students include language arts, mathematics, social studies, science, and health. They have special classes with certified music, art, and physical education teachers. Art and music are offered once a week for approximately 45 minutes and physical education, twice a week for 40 minutes.

Description of surrounding community

Hernando County, Florida, has a population of 110,000. The west boundary of Hernando County borders on the Gulf of Mexico. The county seat is Brooksville, which is located in the center of the county. Most of the native residents reside here. The main businesses in the county are rock mining and education. A few factories have recently moved to the county.

John D. Floyd Elementary is in Spring Hill, located in the southwest section of Hernando County. Due to the growth in Hernando County, the

1980 State Plant and Facilities team approved the building of a new elementary school in the southwest section of Hernando County. John D. Floyd Elementary was built in 1986, with a 936 student capacity. The physical plant consists of 10 buildings in a "U" shaped around a central courtyard. The school buildings are located on 20 of the designated 40-acre school site.

Spring Hill is a rapidly growing community of mostly middle class Caucasians who have relocated from the northeastern United States. It is a fairly new development on the western side of the county comprised of mostly retirees. Due to the large, rapid population growth, this community is slowly taking over the political control of the county. Community members are very active and believe that, through appeals to the School Board and public awareness, resources needed for education can be acquired. The School Board is comprised of five non-partisan elected officials from five separate districts within the county but elected by a countywide majority vote. Although Hernando County residents voted in and spent a 42 million dollar bond issue in 1986 for new schools, growth in the school population has dictated the need for two more schools to be built by 1995, one elementary and one middle school.

Chapter 2

Problem Definition and Evidence

Problem background

The dropout rate in the State of Florida increased from 6.91% in 1987-1988 to 7.54% in 1988-1989. Florida ranked the highest in the nation with respect to dropout rate according to the Florida Department of Education (1990). The legislature encouraged counties to address the dropout problem by providing weighted full-time equivalency dollars to programs dealing with students at risk from elementary to high school.

The first attempts to deal with elementary children who appeared to be unprepared, unsuccessful, or unmotivated in Hernando County were the transitional classes. These classes served as a "transitional" year for a student who did not master county objectives in one year. They were not a whole year behind, so retention was not appropriate. These transitional classes were first recommended by the teachers who had the responsibility of bringing a child to a certain readiness level for the next grade. The child who was not quite ready to be promoted was recommended for this class.

Parents were not very supportive of retention or transitional classes. For promotional purposes, a child advanced from grade to grade. Primary grades K-2 were separated from elementary grades 3-5 when addressing achievement. The county policy allowed a child to be retained once in the K-2 primary group and once in the 3-5 elementary grouping. If a child was retained more than one year in the grouping, a battery of testing was mandated. This presented several contradictions in philosophies. On one

hand, statistics tend to support that retention has negative effects on students. The Florida Commission of Education (1987) reported the yearly retention rate for the nation's schools was six percent. Nationally, the cost of retaining these 2.4 million students was 10 billion dollars per year. Cost for remediation in grades kindergarten, first, and second was 90 million dollars. Those retained two or more years had a 5% chance to receive a high school diploma. Even though the monetary investment was substantial, more important was the cost to society (Shepard, 1989). On the other hand, schools are heavily criticized for not educating students to compete successfully in the world market. There is a push for raising the skills and requirements for high school graduation.

Parents who attended the child study meetings, which were held to discuss administrative placement or retention of their child, were in favor of administrative placement. The parents realized that their child did not meet grade-level academic minimum skills. Parents stated they preferred placement so their children would not be labeled failures and would continue to advance with their peers. If students were administratively placed in the next grade without meeting requirements, these students would be lacking adequate minimal skills.

A teacher for children at risk in the elementary schools was first allocated in 1987. The class was to serve 18 fourth- and fifth-grade students. In 1990, each elementary school was allocated a transitional third-grade teacher, a fourth-grade teacher and aide, and a fifth-grade teacher and aide for students assigned to the class. Fifty-one students were to be identified to generate appropriate full-time equivalency funding (FTE). A student who

was disinterested, unsuccessful, or unmotivated could qualify for the program as specified by the county. Truancy, socioeconomic status, and achievement were of consideration but not a requirement. The two classes for students at risk were capped at 18; the transitional, at 15. Special funding was provided for supplemental materials and equipment. It was the principal's responsibility to purchase appropriate materials and equipment. Children were recommended for participation by teachers, guidance personnel, or parents.

Consequently, 51 students were enrolled and classified as at risk in the third, fourth, and fifth grade dropout prevention programs at John D. Floyd Elementary School in Spring Hill, Florida, in June 1990. The identification process and the intervention procedures to meet these students' needs as early in their school careers as possible, which in turn might contribute to academic success, was a concern of the principal. In an informal meeting with the principal, 15 concerned classroom teachers expressed a lack of clarity about placement criteria and intervention procedures for students at risk. They were concerned and dissatisfied with the lack of structure in the county plan to identify the 51 students at risk. The corresponding pressure to identify students in order to earn F.T.E. disturbed the staff.

Reporting of student data was the responsibility of the principal. The data clerk at the school was given the necessary information by the guidance personnel. In an interview with the data clerk, she expressed concern that the information was not listed on a standard county form, but in a haphazard and sketchy fashion, which created a problem in county reporting of data to the state department (T. Marten, personal communication, August 10, 1990). The

logistics of scheduling child study meeting time, re-evaluation of progress, and parent conferences held prior to initial placement were up to the individual school and each phase varied in length. Due to the fact that records were poorly organized from school to school, there was no consistent information on students.

John D. Floyd Elementary teachers recognized the need for an alternative to educating students who lacked experiences and educational background to be successful in a structured conventional classroom. Practices in dealing with students experiencing difficulties attempted to address the problem. However, the number of students not meeting the grade-level objectives in elementary school indicated an area of concern. The suggested identification procedure was an arbitrary yardstick in determining students at risk. The variety and types of interventions used were not clearly established or readily available for teacher use with these children. Parental involvement for students at risk was virtually nonexistent. Students at risk were identified only by socioeconomic status, and taught by traditional lecture-dictation-practice methods.

Evidence of problem discrepancy

Although the county plan specified suggested criteria for placement, the assignment of students was somewhat arbitrary (Appendix A). Hernando County identified possible students at risk as those who qualified for free- or reduced-priced lunches, those performing below the 25th percentile on a standardized test, those with excessive absenteeism, and those retained in a grade level. However, the criteria actually used by Hernando County to

identify students at risk were not structured or specific. Teachers who were asked to use these criteria were not convinced these were the only qualifiers. They were given the latitude to use additional criteria, which varied from school to school (Appendix B).

Florida required a minimum skills assessment test be given to all Florida students in grades 3, 5, 8, and 11. Students who did not pass the standards were to be remediated, and documentation was required to demonstrate their mastery of the standards. Students not mastering the standards were retained. In 1990, however, the testing for grades three and five was abolished to remove emphasis on the minimum requirements. The standardized and state achievement scores of those students referred for 1990-1991 alternative education classes at John D. Floyd Elementary were reviewed and analyzed.

Seventy percent of the identified students in the fourth-grade alternative education group in 1989-1990 school year did not show mastery of their first attempt in their grade three testing of 1988. Likewise, 75% of those in the fifth-grade alternative education classroom did not show mastery in their grade-three test of 1987. In addition, 76% of the 51 students scored below the national mean in the total battery California Test of Basic Skills (CTBS) for the previous year. Twenty-one percent had been referred to the office for disciplinary action. Eighteen percent had missed four or more days of school the previous year. Nineteen percent of these children had already failed one grade (Table 1).

Table 1

Description of Students Enrolled in the Dropout Prevention Programs by Various Categories Based on School Records

	Failed One or More SSAT Standards	Scored Below National Mean 1990 CTBS	Discipline Referrals 1989-90	Absent Four or More Days 1989-90	Student Failure Incidence
Grade 3	N/A	85%	13%	13%	13%
Grade 4	70%	75%	22%	22%	17%
Grade 5	75%	57%	28%	22%	28%
Average	73%	72%	21%	18%	19%

Students with low grades in at least one subject and not performing to their ability (as indicated on the test of cognitive skills section of the CTBS) could possibly benefit from the alternative education classes. These students were brought to the attention of the Child Study Team. The team suggested intervention strategies the classroom teacher might use. There was no organized system in place for the identification of these students potentially at risk after the child study review. There was minimal teacher involvement, both on the part of the classroom teacher and the teacher of students at risk.

The selection of the curriculum materials and texts was not coordinated with the previous teacher nor was feedback given after a child was in the class for a time. Teachers of students at risk in the county had little contact with each other, and the assessment of the program varied from school to school. The curriculum objectives were set by the teacher of students at risk and followed the county grade-level requirements. Lesson plans were written in behavioral terms. They documented the objectives, the

materials needed, and the specific skill addressed. These skills were part of the county, as well as the state minimum standards. Discipline problems were handled by the teacher, and the behavioral plan varied from school to school. Some teachers designed an effective program with assistance from guidance personnel on using ways to bring about desired behavior and encourage self-esteem.

Table 2

John D. Floyd Elementary Compared to Hernando County Schools. CTBS Total Battery Mean Percentile During 1986-1987, 1987-1988, 1988-1989, 1989-1990

	1987	1988	1989	1990
CTBS (total battery) Grade 3				
J.D. Floyd	72	75	76	78
Hernando County	68	69	63	62
CTBS (total battery) Grade 4				
J.D. Floyd	74	72	79	79
Hernando County	68	69	70	72
CTBS (total battery) Grade 5				
J.D. Floyd	72	73	73	73
Hernando County	64	65	63	66
SSAT Grade 3				
J.D. Floyd	96	97	92	N/A
Hernando County	95	95	94	N/A
SSAT Grade 5				
J.D. Floyd	89	93	92	N/A
Hernando County	90	89	91	N/A

As a whole, students at John D. Floyd Elementary School consistently performed above the county average in standardized assessment tests. When comparisons were made using the percentile score based on the total battery of Floyd students with other Hernando County students, results were favorable. Almost each year, specified indications showed students scoring above the district mean (Table 2).

In spite of the positive mean scores, there were students who did not perform at or above their academic capabilities. Of concern were 20 to 40 students at each grade level who had problems keeping up with their peers. These students qualified, in part, for the Alternative Studies to Regular Studies (ASTROS) program.

Reviewing the spring 1990 CTBS percentile scores of the students assigned to the alternative education classes showed that 85% of the third graders, 75% of the fourth graders, and 64% of the fifth graders scored below the 50th percentile. Interestingly, a child identified as at risk tended to score lower in language arts than in mathematics. The three alternative education teachers interviewed agreed that the emphasis on academics was too intense early in the child's educational career, which may have led to frustration and disinterest in school.

A large number of the assigned students performed poorly according to academic measurements in both mathematics and language arts. Further analysis of Floyd at-risk student profiles when compared to the county profiles, showed they possessed one or more characteristics used for identification of students at risk.

The initial identification of a student for placement into an alternative education classroom at John D. Floyd Elementary was usually teacher recommendation. Students who had not mastered course objectives as the school year progressed were suspected of having a problem of one sort or another. Unsuccessful students were brought by the classroom teacher for further assessment by the Child Study team. Thus, a red flag was put up for a possible at-risk placement. The Child Study team assessed the current strategies the teacher was using for academic performance and recommended interventions the teacher could use.

In Child Study meetings, time and again, the suggested strategies for dealing with students having problems emphasized the use of manipulatives, the whole language approach, the learning style of students, as well as the teaching style of teachers. Follow-up to determine the Child Study team's effectiveness was suggested but never pursued.

If this process did not result in academic growth, the child was referred for further testing or for placement in special alternative programs. The guidance team intervened with weekly self-esteem group therapy. This child was placed in a small group setting, and activities were designed to stimulate self worth.

The guidance counselor solicited candidates for the dropout prevention program in June, at the end of the school year, from the Child Study team. Parent contact was made, and written consent by the parent was required for placement. Most parents, to this point, had no knowledge of the program, criteria for placement, or objectives. They had questions and expressed the need for more information on the program prior to placement.

Parents did not want the stigma of a "special class" to be attached to their child. These children we believed, however, were in danger of failure.

Criteria for assigning students to alternative classes were not made available to each individual teacher as a guide for recommending students for the program. The recommendations were due on June 1, for the following year, but no guidance was given to the teachers in selection of students. The teachers felt they had little input or control over the selection process. The list was not requested in a timely fashion, but as a last minute afterthought.

Parent involvement was nonexistent. Parents interviewed felt that communication about the program was insufficient. Parents also did not understand what role they could play in the educational success of their child. Vandegrift (1992), in an article on rethinking parent involvement, described two key elements. For parents to be involved in their child's education, they need to be supportive and active. To make parent involvement most meaningful to the students and parents, a rapport must be established between the school and parents, and the school must also offer a broad range of activities to encourage support and participation. Parents' comfort is a necessary step to obtaining parent commitment.

At a June 1990 meeting with grade-level chairpersons and the curriculum specialist, student records were reviewed, and students were assigned to classes for the 1990-1991 school year. It became evident that some students barely met the county promotional standards from the previous grade. Approximately 20 students (10%) were placed in strategies each year and fell into this category from each grade level. Since allocations for three additional teachers to concentrate on the students in need were available, the

curriculum specialist, guidance counselor, and principal quickly identified 51 children in grades three, four, and five who appeared to be at risk and assigned them to the transitional third, fourth, and fifth grade alternative education classrooms.

Teachers, when interviewed, were generally unclear about how to measure academic growth of students having learning problems as well as other hindering factors to learning in the regular classroom setting. Guidance counselors and teachers had opposing definitions of at risk. They disagreed with the length of time for intervention and some teachers' attitudes toward assisting children in the regular classroom.

In weekly grade-level meetings concerning the identification of students at risk, teachers expressed a frustration and hesitation to "label" a child. The teacher previously assigned to the class for students at risk lacked communication skills, professional expertise, and was not respected by the teachers in general. Therefore, when teachers were asked to recommend children for the expanded program for students at risk, they hesitated, due to the lack of knowledge about the program, which had not been very successful in the past.

Possible causes of problem

Possible causes of students not succeeding in school may center around inaccurate or late identification of problems requiring assistance, low self-esteem, lack of parental support, and inappropriate educational environment. Certain identified conditions which contribute greatly to classify a student as failing or at risk of completing the prescribed course of study in the

predetermined length of time include dysfunctional family, substance abusing parents, poor interpersonal skills, poor problem solving and coping skills, lack of identifiable positive role models, unrealistic expectations, and perceived solutions (Johnston, 1990). Howard and Anderson (1978) present a set of other indicators with which to classify a student at risk. They include mobility of parents, marital state of parents, abuse by parents, a mild handicap, other mental or physical conditions, age of entry into kindergarten, and attendance in school.

Schools have a degree of internal control over some of the factors: self-esteem, interpersonal skills, problem-solving skills, and coping skills. Schools can provide exposure to positive role models and set learning goals. Likewise, schools can enhance educational settings, provide for appropriate interventions for learning strategies to be effective, and train parents in successful reinforcement activities.

Specific conditions predict failure for a child in the school setting. The conditions appear regularly in the profile of students identified as at risk and fall into the academic and the affective domain. But given that there was no broad set of indicators or an identification process for students when the target group was identified at Floyd, inaccurate placement may have been made.

The need for early identification of students at risk has prompted studies by Gudeman (1987), Middleton (1980), and Wilcynski (1987). Preschool and early elementary-age children at risk were those of concern. If a child was identified and measures taken early in preschool or during elementary school, the child had a greater chance of completing high school.

The Coleman Report (1966) on equality in education emphasized the inequality of experiences of children from a low socioeconomic background compared to-others when entering school. This gap is often perpetuated and accentuated, which forces these children into an at-risk status (Rist, 1970).

Early intervention screening is used by many school systems to identify children in need of special services. The one used by Hernando County was sketchy, at best. The basic criteria for at risk was suggested as an indicator of possible students who qualified for help. This criteria included failure, attendance, and academic test scores, but did not take into account other contributing variables. Educators and others dealing directly or indirectly with children have found certain intervention strategies help children overcome some of these conditions which preclude learning. If children cannot "keep up" with their peers from year to year, they seem to fall further behind academically and socially.

The structure of the school day could detract from learning. Pull-out programs such as Chapter 1, speech therapy, language therapy, enrichment tutoring, remediation tutoring, guidance groups, school activities, in addition to regular movement in a daily schedule, are not conducive to learning for all types of students. In a typical daily schedule, a teacher has to teach language arts, two hours; mathematics, one hour; social studies, one-half hour; and science, one hour. In addition, the student has physical education, art, music, computer, and library once a week for one-half hour. Materials needed for the regular classroom were not appropriate for the child at risk who appeared to need a more individualized hands-on environment. Textbooks were ordered and used in reading, mathematics, spelling, and handwriting.

Teachers indicated a need to explore at-risk characteristics in relation to student learning. Hanson (1990) states that "the academically at-risk student is generally more extroverted, sensing, feeling, and action-oriented type" (p. 20). He went on to state that music education can provide those students at risk with an appropriate medium for intellectual growth. However, studies correlating the arts and dropout prevention were found. Gardner and Hatch (1989) added four dimensions to human talent other than the handling of words, numbers, logical problems, and shapes. They were bodily/kinesthetic intelligence, interpersonal intelligence, and musical intelligence. This evaluation was valuable in developing learning strategies for children.

Other characteristics were noticed. Payne and Payne (1989), while conducting research about "Locus of Control", found students at risk were more externally oriented than those not at risk. Also, they found that age and grade were positively related to internality. Students with poor work-related habits and poor comprehension were found to be in danger of at-risk status. Curriculum revision and assessment of student progress were essential to optimum success.

Teachers resisted new programs for several reasons: lack of training; adding work to an already full teaching load without compensation; and budget constraints. There was a definite need for teachers dealing with special students to receive special training and guidance. Not all teachers could successfully deal with the child at risk. This was substantiated by the needs assessment performed by the Teacher Education Center (TEC) in Spring 1990. John D. Floyd teachers listed the need for inservice on learning styles, modalities, and communication as top priorities (Table 3).

Table 3

John D. Floyd 1990 Needs Assessment Results Prioritized

Title	Percentages
Mathematics Strategies	58%
Communication Skills	53%
Science Instruction	51%
Teaching Strategies	51%
Whole Language Approach to Instruction	49%
Reading Strategies	47%
Developmental Thinking/Reasoning Skills	42%
Curriculum Planning	37%
Learning Styles	37%
Building Self-Esteem	37%

Lack of parent involvement is a potential cause of students not succeeding. Parents of students at risk did not attend open houses or parent conferences, as documented by attendance sheets.

Table 4

Parent Participation of Alternative Education Students - Fall 1990

	Open House	Parent Conferences
Grade 3	45%	53%
Grade 4	41%	52%
Grade 5	60%	63%

Literature consistently cites parent involvement as a major factor in student success and achievements. Lack of involvement, therefore, encourages failure. Howard Johnston (1990) stated that planned parent participation from the early grades was paramount to student improvement. Parental support to students was based on their experiences, attitudes, and values.

Parent attitudes toward education were researched and correlated with student attitudes. Students whose parents performed well in school relayed personal achievements of overcoming failure by turning it into an opportunity. The lower achieving students recalled parental stories based on unfairness and disciplinary actions against them. Johnston (1990) found that school-sponsored involvement and parent-initiated contacts were linked to improved performance and student achievement.

Chapter 3

Problem Situation and Context

In the context of the organizational setting, many political behaviors came into play. There were internal and external influencing factors. These factors could be supportive or hindering to a viable solution in a problem situation.

Internal influences: supporting

The intent of this project was supported in that the Hernando County School District realized, and had committed itself to, addressing the dropout problem. They approved and adopted a Comprehensive Dropout Prevention Plan in October 1990. The plan called for alternative programs designed to serve students who were unmotivated or unsuccessful with a strong emphasis on appropriate agency coordination. Participation was voluntary and meant that the student was not assigned to the program without parental permission. Eligibility criteria included students who had been retained, who had failing grades or grades not commensurate with documented ability, or who had other documentation provided by student services personnel that would indicate that the student was at risk of dropping out of school.

Teachers were provided an extensive inservice program. Four days per year were scheduled for mandatory inservice. Many schools went above and beyond the minimum. Most inservice workshops were presented on a school-based need. Workshops and monies were made available to address the motivation of the child at risk.

An intensive restructuring of county student services organized a support team assigned to schools to assist in guidance and auxillary programs for students. These teams were instrumental in developing modules for the teachers to use in the affective instructional program.

The Board had also entered into cooperative agreements with other appropriate agencies. They included Mental Health Center, Health and Rehabilitative Services, Youth and Family Alternatives, Charter Hospital, Greenbriar, local hospitals and the Hernando County Schools' Parent Resource Center. The parents, students, and staff were able to avail themselves of the services provided by these agencies. If needed, the guidance staff arranged a series of appointments for the family.

The county received a grant to encourage technology in relationship to student learning. This grant demonstrated a county commitment to innovative programs designed to increase student achievement. The program is called Project CHILD (Computers Helping Instruction and Learning Development) and encouraged children to work at their own pace without fear of failure.

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) accredited all schools in Hernando County in 1991. Self-study and goal-setting was a vital component of this process. All employees of the county had a part in the accreditation procedure. This was well received by the teachers and community and demonstrates commitment to education.

The accreditation process, which documented the strengths of Floyd Elementary, showed over half of the teachers have Master's Degrees and had

been in the county an average of 11 years. They were enthusiastic, innovative, and motivated professionals, as documented in the SACS review.

Funds for teachers, classrooms, and supplies for the alternative education program were allocated. The alternative education teachers were experienced and excellent teachers according to documented county teacher evaluations.

Internal influences: hindering

Special educational programs of any kind cause labeling of students. This was a temporary constraint in the solution of the problem. Classes for students at risk inadvertently resulted in some tracking of students. The county had experienced a sensitive tracking issue in the middle schools. Parents of the gifted and high-achieving students had been against the county's curriculum department recommendation to abolish tracking of middle school students.

Another hindering factor was that teachers did not have enough time to communicate with one other about student progression from one grade to the next. Those students who had special needs were not discussed or reviewed by the receiving teacher. As a result, the continuity from one grade to another that might have supported particular students did not occur.

External influences: supporting

National and state goals addressed the dropout issue, but local effort was expected to solve this problem. The community support for John D. Floyd was outstanding. The number of volunteers, both in the Retired Senior

Volunteer Program and the Senior Volunteer Program, qualified the school for the Golden School Award. Hundreds of parents, grandparents and community members performed a variety of duties to assist teachers in the regular classroom. However, parent volunteers were hard to find to assist in alternative education classrooms. The community's businesses, through the Partners in Education Program, provided incentives such as financial and material donations for the school.

The Hernando County Master Gardeners had been a vital part of the alternative education curriculum in the science of gardening. These senior citizens spent hours working with the children in a garden and touched all of their lives in a special way.

The local Y.M.C.A. provided before and after school care for children of working parents. They also had many classes at the "Y" for students. Numerous children's groups, such as Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, Youth Soccer and Baseball leagues, used the grounds after hours. The school had been distinguished as a Red Carpet School, a program designed to encourage and recognize schools dedicated to serving the public, based on parental involvement and warmth.

External influences: hindering

John D. Floyd Elementary parent groups were very vocal and supportive of educational issues on the school level. However, on the county level, the newly elected superintendent had many obstacles to overcome. The preceding superintendent had been elected and served for 21 years. A planned restructuring had begun to emerge, but many delicate situations had

to be dealt with by county and school level administrators. The newspapers and voters had been very detrimental to helping the new administration set a positive environment. This was a constraint to the solution of the problem.

Basically, parents of John D. Floyd Elementary students had been very supportive of PTA efforts, Advisory Committee recommendations, and school functions. One exception was guidance or curriculum inservice for parents which addressed parenting skills. Parents did not support these sessions by their attendance. This was a temporary restraint.

Problems with a particular middle school and the Hernando County School Board caused a chasm in communication between parents and teachers. Unfortunately, this middle school was the school to which John D. Floyd students matriculated for grade six. Many students had siblings in the middle school, and morale was affected.

State budget cutbacks temporarily limited the allocated money for materials and supplies to dropout prevention. The area of at risk, however, was a priority in the county budget due to the national and state emphasis in this area.

Chapter 4

Problem Conceptualization, Solution Strategy, and Project Outcomes

Review of the literature and consultation with others

In an article on the inadequacy of the educational system, Bracey (1991) stated that "contrary to the popular stereotype of dropouts, 66% of dropouts are white, 68% come from two-parent homes, 42% come from suburban high schools, 71% never repeated a grade, and 86% live in a home where English is the native language" (p. 107). John D. Floyd Elementary School, with a predominantly white, upper-middle-class population, fit into this description, and potential dropouts were of concern. The initial strategy was to correctly identify students who possessed one or more dropout traits and to provide intervention to remove these children from at risk status.

The development of an appropriate instrument to identify Floyd students at risk required a review of the strengths and weaknesses of previously used instruments. A comprehensive but simple to use form was preferred by the 34 classroom teachers responsible for assessment. The forms used by Hernando County were both the narrative and objective checklist type (Appendix C). Floyd teachers, when interviewed, did not feel the forms were suitable to their needs. They also felt they were not complete. At risk commonalities were listed and prioritized for effectiveness.

Frymier (1989), in a study of students at risk, used 45 steps in data collection to profile and address dropout prevention. The 45 factors related to at risk identification included school, home, and achievement indicators. A scale was drawn up but not validated in the study. A discrepancy was

explained in that teachers who were involved with the students in the educational setting did not have pertinent information about at risk factors outside the classroom. This lack of information, along with lack of skills in dealing with children at risk and retention of these children, were addressed.

The study also discovered that many schools did not have a procedure to allow a teacher easy access to student records. The cumulative folder information was not complete or accurate. Record keeping was a low priority. This also was an observation made at John D. Floyd Elementary.

Also of concern was the conflicting opinions of whether a teacher should have in depth knowledge of students. On one hand, the professional knowing all of the background of a child could develop effective instructional plans. On the other hand, some teachers label and stereotype students (Frymier, 1989).

A preschool screening questionnaire given to Hernando County parents that asked for information about the child was also used for predicting students possibly at risk. Items pertinent to gross motor development activities such as the age a child began to crawl, walk, skip, gallop, and slide were documented. Verbal development, such as when the child began speaking in words, sentences, and complete thoughts, was likewise documented. Any physical illnesses or traumas were noted. Histories of the mother before conception, during pregnancy, and delivery particulars were described. Any significant information was collected to complete a description of the child's development. These records were used for explaining behaviors. This questionnaire was developed and used for

background on students possibly in need of special programs. Teachers felt this was too much detail.

Another screening device, the Goodenough-Harris Draw-a-Man test, was considered for predictive validity (Simner, 1982). This predictability is reduced if the test is given later in the child's school year. The child is asked to complete a picture. The picture drawn indicates how the child feels about himself in relation to others who affect his life. The emotional and cognitive maturity of the child can be predicted in the completeness and detail of the picture at the beginning of kindergarten. Likewise, the Peabody Picture Test is a verbal assessment of a child's receptive language ability. The child responds to incoming language cues. The child hears, processes, and gives a response. This is an instrument used for screening a child for possible learning difficulties. Receptive language is assessed by showing four pictures. The child picks out the appropriate picture and correlates this to the word clue (Dunn, 1981).

One early identification program used academic achievement, peer acceptance, intelligence, and educational level of the mother for early identification. However, Gage (1990) cites poverty as the most conspicuous factor in determining at risk status. He supports identification early in a school cycle and calls for remedial teaching and counseling to improve achievement, attitude, self-esteem, and identification with the class and school. He feels parents are to be involved in the process.

Identification of students at risk may be comprehensive or simple; it may address home environment and physical, mental and emotional factors, as well as in-school behaviors. Whatever the process, the key indicators listed

most frequently are socioeconomic status and the educational level of the mother.

The research was helpful in confirming the fact that no one set of indicators was complete. It verified that identification was dependent on as many variables as are children. Each child is unique. A basic criteria would screen students at risk; however, the subjective evaluation by staff and parents would determine the environment for success in the intervention program.

Interventions to be used by the staff were suggested after a thorough investigation of available programs which addressed the needs of the child at risk. Staff development was fundamental to the intervention plans to teach the students at risk. Teachers in Albemarble County Public Schools took the first step in dealing with students at risk by adopting a common definition of at risk. Low grades were used as the key indicator, since they were highly correlated with poor attendance, behavior problems, and dropping out of school. The second step was to address the teachers' organizational skills and interpersonal relations. If these were considered weak, the method of instruction needed to be changed (Duke, 1992).

Along this line, Hernando County had researched and developed child study teams to better address exceptional student needs. The teams were instituted with the mandatory Dropout Prevention plan. They were comprised of key professionals. The guidance counselors, exceptional education teachers, regular classroom teachers, the school psychologist, the school social worker, the speech and language therapist, the curriculum specialist, and the assistant principal are members of the team. The purpose

is to decide collectively on the best intervention for students in special programs.

In the model presented, instructional assistance plans are developed for individual students. Assistance is given in the classroom with no pull-out programs. Teachers work in teams to customize plans. Unsuccessful plans are revised quickly, and teachers are given staff development to help students meet the plan.

Several varieties of programs for students at risk were evaluated. Success for All is a program designed to deliver whatever plan is needed from research-based curriculum and instructional methods in all grades, reduced class size, activities to build positive relationships, and involvement of parents to assure a child's success. The program is designed to keep a child in the classroom, despite any learning problems, during the first three years of school with the emphasis on using whatever is educationally appropriate to teach that child.

Specific strategies within the at risk setting needed to be considered. Time on task, learning styles, higher level thinking skills, one-to-one instruction, extended day programs, computer assisted instruction, affective guidance programs, and class size were researched.

In defense of expensive early education programs such as non-graded primary and one-to-one tutoring, Slavin (1992) stated, "Success in early grades does not guarantee success throughout school years and beyond, but failure in early grades does virtually guarantee failure in later schooling" (p. 11). He reported the need for prevention and early interventions to eradicate school failure.

There was a strong, consistent, positive relationship between student engaged time and learning gains. Student learning would increase when teachers closely addressed the relationship between "allocated time" and "engaged time" (Brophy and Evertson, 1976). Similarly, time on task was positively associated with learning. High achieving students spent less time off task (Fisher, 1978). Teachers planned for block scheduling to allow a minimum of disruption.

Correlations of student attention with gain in achievement were .40 when the student was the unit of analysis (Bloom, 1976). Students were more on task when the task was important to them. Teachers surveyed students to identify hobbies and after school activities. Units were designed around students' interests.

Soar and Soar (1980) found time on task related positively with a low cognitive level outcome. Teaching styles and cognitive levels may be related, but there was no clear indication of these results; likewise, at a point, time on task became counter-productive.

Beane (1991) presented the reasoning for the need of self-esteem components in education. The school's social role, the positive correlation between self-esteem and achievement, as well as developing coping skills used later in life are the main reasons for teachers to construct learning experiences which develop self-esteem for all students.

The CTBS scores indicated a need for academic emphasis with focus on enhanced mastery learning. The Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) program (Progrow, 1990) teaches the child at risk to understand "understanding". Students are encouraged to develop thinking skills which

apply in all situations. Students are encouraged to extend thinking. Mastery learning is the desired outcome of objectives. Another view on outcome-based learning was a two part program by Kellam and Hunter (1976) which attempted to address the affective, as well as the academic, domain. This program addressed early intervention in a Black ghetto area of Chicago. One part of the program was entitled Enhanced Mastery Learning, which provided special activities to increase reading comprehension. Another phase dealt with the use of activities to reduce shyness and undesirable aggressive behavior. The gains in both areas were positive.

Mastery learning, as opposed to norm-referenced learning, based on the Bell curve, allows students to work at an individual pace taking into account differences in achievement levels. John D. Floyd Elementary teachers decided on individualizing the learning module to fit student needs. Bloom (1976) has found correcting student's work results in approximately 25% of the achievement gained in mastery learning.

Worthen (1993), in an article on alternative assessment, encouraged the revamping of testing to compliment the upgraded curriculum. In the curriculum changes for the year 2000, complex thinking, as opposed to rote memorization, is presented. Students learn in a multitude of modalities and respond in developmental patterns. Learning is integrated across disciplines to provide for individualized instruction, varied interests, and learning levels.

Project CHILD is a technological approach to education, focusing on centers in self-directed study to increase achievement. John D. Floyd Elementary was awarded a grant to implement the program in six classrooms,

K through 5, respectively. This program emphasizes technology in the form of computers and listening stations to reinforce learning. Students learn through individualized programs delivered by a team of teachers. A kindergarten, first, and second grade block of children work together for three years with three teachers and an aide. The instructors are trained in individualized and computer instruction. Teachers discuss students in regularly scheduled meetings to upgrade or revise IEPs. Teachers from the alternative classes observed and participated in the Project CHILD classrooms. They incorporated the methods into their own classrooms (Butzin, 1990).

Chapter 1, a federally funded program for children scoring low in the standardized achievement test, also incorporates computers as a major component of instruction. The program has documented achievement gains for students assigned to the class, which supplants classroom instruction. The pullout model has not proven to be as effective as the in-class model. Teachers at John D. Floyd preferred to keep the students in class and movement to a minimum.

Effective teachers present a structured plan, lesson drill, and practice after demonstrations and give feedback to individual students according to needs (Brophy & Evertson, 1976). Teachers at John D. Floyd modeled lessons after these principles learned through the Florida Performance Measurement System (FPMS).

The guidance component of the alternative education classroom was to include activities which address socialization skills, attitudes, values, and beliefs. Learning styles have been used effectively in developing self-confidence and responsibility for learning. By respecting individual

differences, a student at risk accentuates the positive and develops self-esteem (Perrin, 1990).

Dr. Joe Wittmer, lecturing at the Florida Leadership Staff Development Conference in St. Petersburg, Florida, September 23, 1992, stated that students at risk tend to come from dysfunctional families or a weak family structure. Students must be taught skills to deal with parents unable to be supportive or those who affect them negatively. These children, if negatively effected, could possibly be at risk. He proposed that these students must be exposed to fundamental values lacking in their childhood. They also must be prepared to deal with difficult home living conditions. In addition, schools must be structured to fit the students. In an attempt to overcome negative aspects of our culture, the following need to occur:

1. Help parents articulate clear aspirations to their children.
2. Give parents and children concrete strategies to save money to be used for keeping children in school.
3. Communicate clear plans for a child to succeed in school.

He went on to say that if parents cannot do this, they should take care not to harm the child by encouraging absenteeism, showing disrespect for a child's teacher or those in authority, removing the power and control of the teacher, and above all, ruining the child's self-esteem (Wittmer, personal communication, September 23, 1992).

In an article supporting parent and school involvement, Edwards (1992) suggested family and school communication is a two-way street. She encouraged open exchanges between the school and families. Stable, close-knit neighborhood schools reinforced parental and community values in the

past. The stability and continuity encouraged learning. She felt that while educators call for parent involvement, parents do not feel a part of the school community. -Examples cited were meetings scheduled during work hours, minimum home to school communication, and few opportunities to observe classes. A coordination of resources to build on community strengths would develop a working network.

A planned parent involvement program is effective when it is comprehensive and long lasting. It should be developmental and focus on resources, support to the parents, and support to the school (Flaxman, 1992). Schools should serve the public by providing an open door policy, facilitate support groups, make facilities available for community activities, and assist parents in helping their children.

Class size may also be a factor in teaching effectiveness. Achilles (1986) found evidence to indicate the benefits of a small class in terms of pupil achievement in primary and early elementary (K through 3) as well as positive benefits for minority pupils. Since class size may have resulted in academic achievement, the alternative education classes were capped at 18.

Carlson (1986) studied the effects of a kindergarten/first-grade combination classroom compared with retention or promotion of students to grade one and found the students at risk did much better academically than students at risk who received no interventions and were promoted. John D. Floyd Elementary, having established a transitional classroom and two alternative educational classes, seemed to be, in a large sense, off to a great start in terms of designing an environment for students at risk.

The Gregorc Style Delineator is a self-assessment instrument which coordinates teaching and learning styles. The person answers a series of forced-choice descriptors of personality traits. These descriptors are ranked and tallied. A dominant style emerges when plotted on a graph. The four style categories are: concrete sequential; concrete random; abstract random; and abstract sequential (Gregorc, 1982).

A person dominant in concrete sequential is product-oriented, ordered, practical, and logical. Validation is paramount and focuses on material reality as well as physical objects. The negative characteristics of a concrete sequential style are that the person tends to follow excessive conformity and may be unfeeling or possessive. A teacher with this style prefers clear definition and a pattern to follow and would prefer students who are succinct and logical thinkers. There is a low tolerance for distraction and too much activity. This teacher likes students to be task-oriented and productive.

A concrete random person deals in the present and is intuitive, independent, and impulsive in thinking. This teacher likes activity and unstructured problem-solving situations where alternatives and options can be tested. The teaching environment that is most comfortable is one of least restriction. Classrooms are experimental types where children are encouraged to branch out and try new ideas.

The abstract random individual is emotional, psychic, perceptive, and critical. Time for this type of teacher is artificial and restrictive, and routine is considered boring. Imagination and refinement are encouraged. Activity and color stimulate the abstract random person to learn or teach in the multi-dimensional or web-like mode. Webbing is beginning with a concrete

product and branching out into related parts of the whole. Children are encouraged to redefine and mold into something better. A teacher with this dominate type would be very supportive and aware of the emotional needs of the children, allowing them emotional and physical freedom..

The abstract sequential personalities are intellectual, logical, and analytical. The focus is on knowledge, facts, documentation, concepts, and ideas. This type of teacher prefers an environment that is quiet, ordered, and mentally stimulating. Scope and sequence are important. This teacher would usually transmit knowledge through graphs, the spoken word, or the written word. Work is best accomplished in an environment that has few distractions or little supervision. High goals of social and academic achievement are expected results.

Snider (1990) found there is no support for the adaption of learning styles to raise achievement levels. She promoted teaching in more than one modality to reach all types of learners. The knowledge of teaching and learning styles is a definite advantage in structuring learning activities for students. Teachers at Floyd expressed a need for understanding children's learning styles in the TEC Needs Assessment Survey 1990 (Table 3).

Planned Solution Components

Reviewing the literature and consulting with knowledgeable others indicated a need to improve the identification process. The following solution strategies for identifying students at risk in Hernando County would serve as a guide to successful teaching for all children with special needs.

1. Develop a core intervention team for monitoring studies.
2. Develop an objective instrument for identifying students at risk.
3. Develop a basic entry and exit plan with an Individual Education Plan for each identified student.
4. Provide a planned variety of inservice modules for teachers to address the following: learning modalities, self-esteem, parent communication, and whole language instruction.
5. Develop a monitoring and evaluation instrument to assess results of the project.
6. Develop a parent involvement inservice module to educate parents in support and reinforcement of parenting skills.

The personnel to comprise the intervention team would be the alternative education teachers, the guidance counselor, the social worker, the psychologist, the elementary specialist, and the principal. The identification instrument would be drawn up by this team, using the county adopted curriculum checklist as a guide.

Staff development activities would be provided on topics pertinent to the student at risk. Teachers would be given assistance in the selection of appropriate learning enhancement materials. Parents' participation would be encouraged by providing frequent meetings to answer questions, develop home strategies to assist the students, and provide a network community.

Objectives projected for the project: terminal objectives

1. Teachers will increase their use of mathematics and whole language techniques in the classroom, as evidenced by lesson plans, field observations using the FPMS, and student-teacher observation and interviews.

2. As a result of parent workshops, parents of the targeted students will report they have used specific behaviors at home to reinforce the school plan. This will be measured by a survey. Support will also be measured by attendance at staffings, parent workshops, and volunteer classroom hours.
3. Academic achievement of the target students will increase through mastery learning as measured by standardized test scores, student portfolios, teacher made pre- and posttests, and observation logs kept by teachers and guidance personnel to include the affective domain.

Objectives projected for the project: process objectives

1. The Intervention Team (I Team) will create an assessment process that will identify children as at risk as measured by a specific checklist. This process will include an entry-exit plan, specific criteria for assessing appropriate learning levels and evaluating the child's success in the classroom. Effectiveness will be measured by increased attendance, reduced discipline referrals and increased achievement.
2. Alternative education teachers will streamline the curriculum presented to the identified students. They will teach these identified students using the whole language approach, high intensity delivery with emphasis on self-esteem. Individual Education Plans (IEP) for each child will be developed. Teachers will develop learning activities appropriate for each child as

measured by a review of student cumulative folders and teacher lesson plans. These plans will show evidence of whole language presentations, emphasis on self-esteem and other effective strategies for children with specific needs (i.e. manipulatives, computers, active-cooperative learning).

3. An Intervention Team (I Team), which includes the alternative education teachers, school guidance counselor, school psychologist, school social worker, elementary specialist, and principal, will meet on a weekly basis to review records of potential candidates for the alternative program referred by the Child Study team.
4. All teachers will participate in workshops on learning strategies, designing Individual Education Plans, effective communication, and learning styles of students and teachers.
5. Parent support and involvement will be incorporated strategically into each phase of the project with the goal of creating a commitment of the family unit to help the child. Parents will be used as volunteers in the classroom. A parent resource room with appropriate supplemental literature will be available. Parenting classes will be scheduled to encourage sharing of ideas and networking.

Side effects

This project included a comparison with the success of a school technology grant for the 1991-1992 school year, using an ungraded approach (Project CHILD). Follow up and tracking of a student into the middle school

setting proved helpful in assessing the program. Early identification methods were expected to benefit and encourage intervention in kindergarten, first, and second grade classes.

Intervention techniques were incorporated, not only in the regular classroom, but also in special education classes. The staff development of teachers would help them keep abreast of the current educational trends and would enhance the total school program, as well as improve morale.

Goals of the enterprise

It was expected that this project would be timely to the restructuring efforts of Hernando County. The increased success rate of students would result in fewer dropouts and a better foundation for children. The objective instrument for identification of students at risk was expected to provide an efficient, effective, and accurate process to correctly place students. The interventions used for children at risk enhanced learning and fostered self-esteem for all children, and, in turn, strengthened basic education foundations. The focus on family communication during the process of identification and interventions increased communication for the entire school community.

Hernando County goals for 1990-1991 included increasing student achievement through an intense review of all curriculum areas during the adoption year for textbooks. The cycle is a three- to five-year evaluation process. This project addresses achievement. Another major goal of the county is to reduce dropouts. The intent of early intervention and identification for any child with special needs is the focus of this project.

Chapter 5

Strategy Implementation

Original action plan

Phase One of the action plan for early identification and interventions for students at risk to increase achievement in grades three, four, and five was only to organize the project, gather baseline data and orient the personnel directly involved in the goals. The analysis of past criteria and successes of the alternative education program provided direction for the project. The needs analysis referred to in Chapter 1, as well as the strengths of the teachers, were used in planning workshops to be presented. The staff development modules for communication, learning styles, whole language, and mathematics instruction were chosen with the goals in mind.

Students' interests were considered and appropriate motivational tools were carefully chosen. The whole language curriculum structure was helpful in the development of units relevant to students' interests. Effective parent communication was planned and developed. Consideration was given to parent needs and the obstacles deterring parent participation.

Phase Two consisted of application of the knowledge acquired by the instructors. The students were instructed in the use of the various manipulatives and materials for enhancement of learning. The Positive Action Program (1983) was instituted in the classroom. Parents were encouraged to attend and participate in parenting programs through verbal

and written communication. Positive communication between school and home was emphasized.

In Phase Three, teachers were instrumental in developing the assessment tools and in the evaluation of the program. The parent assessments, student surveys, and teacher checklists were used in the design of the final checklist. County level support by the observers of the project was used as a check and balance of the evaluation of the project.

Chronology of implementation activities

Strategies were developed to meet the process and terminal objectives. The methods employed focused on the strengths of the writer as perceived by a leadership appraisal assessment (Appendix D). Early strategies were general in nature and converged on the specific as the project developed. The first stages addressed the organization and implementation of goals. Vision statements were formulated and goals prioritized. Action plans were revised when time, budget, and personnel constraints were of consideration.

A separate and informal meeting was held on February 5, 1991, where the rationale for the project which addressed early identification and interventions of students at risk to increase achievement was presented to the chosen observers. The writer met individually with the three colleagues so their questions or concerns about their areas of responsibility could be answered. All three were very receptive and excited to be a part of the project.

The first observer enlisted for monitoring of the proposal was the Elementary Supervisor. She was chosen for her knowledge of curriculum and the application thereof to county adopted standards and objectives. In the

initial meeting the MARP process was explained and the conceptual form of the project presented. The supervisor was most interested in the interventions to be used. She perceived that a general problem in elementary education was in the actual interventions used by individual teachers to meet individual student needs. She felt that the many technologies described in teaching, such as cooperative learning, phonics, whole language, technology in learning were only as effective as the teachers' use of these educational tools. This only legitimatized the need for a planned series of interventions which had already been tested with children who learned in a variety of styles.

She suggested the auditory, visual, and kinesthetic learning styles be considered and the presentation of the lessons be coordinated with the students learning styles. The structured reinforcements of mathematics by using manipulatives in concept building was discussed. The whole language approach to teaching in an elementary classroom incorporated the previously splintered curricula and tied the lessons together in themes or units. Activities were to be open ended and allowed for individualized strengths to emerge. Children were to be encouraged to explore and extend thinking. The entry level was to be measured, and teachers were to educate each child from individually established baselines. The students were to set the learning pace appropriate for the activity. Students were not to be placed in structured homogenious boxes.

The Elementary Supervisor was of the opinion that the interventions proposed would not only be applicable to the alternative classroom, but also to the regular or special education classes. The staff development of teachers

was further encouraged by state and local mandates for county teacher centers. These mandates encouraged inservice programs in research-based teaching methods which develop effective schools (B. Durdin, personal communication, February 5, 1991).

In the meeting with the Research, Evaluation, and Testing Supervisor, the project proposed was explained as well as the implication for assessment in the district. Her concern was that testing not be limited to standardized, norm-referenced testing, but consider the type of child in the alternative education classroom. She described research efforts that encouraged the use of various evaluation and assessment instruments to judge a child's progress. It was agreed that the emphasis be on an individual plan of development.

She felt the academic success of these students at risk was a top priority for all those involved in the project: supervisors, parents, teachers, and administrators. Various assessment measurements were discussed and the predictability of success in each method. A portfolio would document entry level skills, the intervention interval, and the growth of individual students. Anecdotal records from observations of student behavior and growth were discussed. Curriculum based assessment, as well as the holistic approach to grading, were reviewed by the Research, Evaluation, and Testing Supervisor and the writer (P. McIntyre, personal communication, February 5, 1991).

The third observer's contribution to the project focused on county views of the total alternative program, its needs, strengths, and weaknesses. The Director of Special Programs expressed concern in that countywide, a procedure was not in effect. The identification of candidates for the alternative program varied from school to school within the district. The

guidelines were not clearly defined, and the identification instrument was not finely tuned (J. Knight, personal communication, February 5, 1991).

All three observers were encouraging and felt the need for early identification and interventions were of concern. Commitment to the project was pledged by the three observers.

On March 5, 1991, the writer met with the three alternative education teachers from John D. Floyd Elementary School to assess the status of the county curriculum as it related to the alternative education classroom. The existing county curriculum was reviewed and alternatives were suggested. The discrepancies between what was suggested by the county curriculum guide and the actual reality of the classroom offerings were discussed. It was agreed that there was a decided difference in what is and what ought to be included. The main areas the three teachers were concerned about were mathematics and language arts. It was the consensus that the main focus was to present these two disciplines as effectively as possible.

The teachers and the writer also discussed classroom discipline. They agreed rules for classroom organization were to be developed by students. The guidance staff was to reinforce classroom rules and to carry the behavior contract one step further by providing a time out or alternative situation for students who are in a classroom crisis situation. The administration role in the discipline plan was to provide the support and be the last alternative to discipline problems which would arise.

Teachers reviewed county procedures for the identification of students at risk which addressed socioeconomic status. Grades from previous years,

test scores, discipline records, and attendance were documented and provided baseline data.

On April 10, 1991, the newly identified intervention team, including the alternative education teachers, school guidance counselor, school psychologist, school social worker, elementary specialist, and principal met. At the first meeting, goals were proposed and objectives were discussed. The consensus of the group was that the main goal of the alternative education program was to arm students at risk with the necessary tools to succeed in school and in life. The purposes of the alternative education program were listed as follows:

To identify learning styles and strengths of students considered at risk.

To teach to those learning styles and strengths.

To focus on high self-esteem and the positive attitude necessary for success.

To develop skills and roles of parents so the interaction with adults was profitable and supportive.

To provide materials necessary for intense curriculum emphasis using adequate supplemental materials for reinforcements.

To develop individual plans for each student since the identifiers for each student to be classified at risk were so diverse.

A survey to determine the current status of the alternative education program was drafted. The target group was to include parents and teachers of students assigned to the alternative education program. The survey was sent to all parents of the 51 students. The 33% return was used for analyzing the program. Weaknesses of the program were communication and labeling of students at risk. Strengths of the program, according to the survey, were the

curriculum, the teachers, the staff, and the materials used (Appendix E). Parents, for the most part, were knowledgeable about the curriculum. They were satisfied with the progress of their child and the program.

Students were interviewed instead of being asked to complete a survey. Students liked the class due to the structure and the content presented. They appreciated being asked about their hobbies and interests. However, they did not like testing in any form.

A survey of teachers addressed the concerns of the classroom teachers and was used to improve the curriculum and objectives of the class (Appendix F). Mastery learning was the suggested form of evaluation. The teachers also listed academic scores, teacher observations, academic focus, low self-esteem, inability to master skills, and social problems as suggested criteria for identification of alternative education students. They felt parental support and permission was essential.

The staff needs assessment supported the areas for development and learning styles, modalities, mathematics teaching tools, and cooperative learning modules, as well as the whole language approach, as presented in Chapter 1. The teachers were most excited about the new direction of the program. Students who required much extra attention in the regular classroom would be considered for the alternative class which had a teacher and a teacher aide to keep the teacher-to-student ratio low.

Teachers met by grade level in May. These grade level meetings focused on the assignment of students to the 1991-1992 program. The staff was asked for input and feedback on the alternative education program. Suggestions were solicited to improve the program. The staff was provided

very basic criteria and asked to recommend students to be considered for the 1991-1992 alternative education program. The criteria are listed here.

1. Students who had been brought for review to the Child Study team were considered for a more appropriate educational environment.
2. Students who just barely passed to the next grade and were not performing successfully in the academic setting.
3. Students who did not qualify for special programs and scored poorly on standardized tests.
4. Students whose behavior was prohibiting them from being successful.

Alternative education teachers met the second week in May to realign goals and objectives designed in April for the next school year. Information provided by the staff was reviewed and incorporated into the objectives. A goal of the program was to provide intense, meaningful instruction to help the child master skills needed and return that child to the regular classroom. Teachers were concerned about the mainstreaming, or reentry, of these students and insurance that the academic skills were parallel to the regular classroom instructional requirements.

Parents of the 1990-1991 students attended a parent meeting. They were asked to provide input from a parent's view after experiencing the program for one year. The comments were favorable. The area of most concern was labeling of students by other teachers and peers. Returning of students to the regular classroom was unclear, and parents wanted to know the plan for mainstreaming their child. To this point, a plan for mainstreaming was nonexistent (Appendix G).

On June 4, 1991, a committee, comprised of the three alternative education teachers and six classroom teachers representing each grade level, developed an assessment process for identifying students at risk, using a checklist as the vehicle. The checklist included standardized test scores, failures in previous years, attendance records, previous grades in the various subjects areas, teacher recommendations, discipline records, free/reduced-price lunch status, qualifications for any specialized programs, and child study records (Appendix H).

An open invitation was sent to parents of students identified to be potentially at risk and considered for the 1991-1992 alternative education classroom. Parents were asked to meet with teachers or guidance personnel when convenient. A conferencing schedule was designed to take into account parent work hours. The purposes of this conference were to raise concerns, to allow the parents to visit the alternative education classrooms, and to observe the children in a classroom setting. Forty of the 51 parents scheduled and attended a conference.

Alternative education teachers met twice in August to improve the curriculum offered to these students. Specific skills were discussed, and teachers developed learning modules to include various modalities in each lesson so that any learner could have the concept development in the best learning environment. Whole language units were organized. Units addressed the interest areas of the students of the class. Delivery methods were discussed. Teaching modalities were considered. These meetings were facilitated by the elementary assistant. An agenda was developed so that the focus would remain on the purpose of the meeting.

Short lessons with intense emphasis were planned. Lesson plans with short and long term goals were outlined. The three alternative education teachers revised the planning form to document the specific skills reviewed, introduced, or mastered. The form was individualized so each child had an individual education plan (IEP). A portfolio was designed for each child. The aides were to monitor and document the child's work. Flexibility was built into the plans.

Guidance counselors assisted teachers in scheduling planned activities for developing self-esteem and celebrating successes. Positive Action Kits were ordered. These kits supplemented self-esteem activities presented by the guidance counselor. Reward policies and behavior contracts were discussed. A consultant, who is also a principal in Pasco County, Florida, presented a program to the staff on positive attitudes on August 18, during preschool. All 37 classroom and alternative education teachers were present.

During preschool, the curriculum supervisor assisted the alternative education teachers in ordering materials and equipment to supplement the curriculum and modalities. A variety of materials to stimulate the interest levels of the child at risk were considered and ordered. The focus of the materials was to sharpen the critical and higher order thinking skills. Purchase orders were sent.

Budget allocations were distributed with special considerations to the development of a model program for students at risk. Teachers were allocated $300.00 for each classroom in addition to the textbooks and consumables necessary for instruction. The money was used for intervention

materials such as action kits, manipulatives, software, and supplemental books.

Beginning in September 1991, the Intervention Team (I Team) scheduled meetings on Wednesdays, before or after weekly child study meetings to discuss concerns, procedures, curriculum, or individual students. The meetings were not structured, but a 25-minute limit was observed.

Alternative education teachers focused on complimenting the needs of the special offerings of a classroom which would provide for a variety of activity centers to enrich and encourage participation by the students. Activity centers featured aquaria, terraria, small appliances, motors, cooking, baking, planetaria, listening strategies, garden plots, videos, science projects, geography, maps, and globes. Interventions called for hands-on lessons in the various centers.

On October 6, 8, and 9, 1991, respectively, the writer met individually with the observers. The purpose was to update them and to consider any input they had to strengthen the project. Suggestions were solicited. The Student Services Coordinator was interested in the checklist that had been developed. The content was analyzed as to the appropriateness for use in alternative education programs in other schools.

The Research, Evaluation and Testing Supervisor reviewed the checklist and standardized test scores. An aptitude evaluation and a battery of placement tests were considered for future use with students potentially at risk. The achievement scores of the school from Spring 1991, were compared to the district test results. Alternative forms of assessment were considered, since most students at risk refuse to be tested or do not perform to their ability

for one reason or another. The alternative education teachers also expressed concern for the accurate testing of students.

On October 22, 1991, a Professor of Elementary Education at the University of South Florida was hired by the Teacher Education Center to present a workshop on learning strategies and designing Individual Education Plans. All teachers participated. The emphasis was on the whole language curriculum implementation. In the follow-up assignments, children were assessed and modalities were prescribed to provide for the optimum learning environment. Samples of Individual Education Plans presented by the consultant were used as guides. Teachers were given samples of components for effective plans.

On October 29, 1991, which marked the end of the first nine weeks, schoolwide conferences were held. Parents were invited to meet with the teacher to discuss their child's progress. Of 51 parents of the students in the alternative education program, only 21 responded. This was of concern to the alternative education teachers.

Regularly scheduled assessment of each teacher by the curriculum specialist, which was performed in November, verified the inclusion of certain components in lesson plan books. These components integrated whole language instruction with modules in self-esteem programs, computer activities, cooperative learning experiences, and individualized instruction.

Manipulatives such as cuisinnaire rods and unifix cubes, enhanced mathematics instruction by providing concept anchors. Aquaria and terraria encouraged science projects. As an example, social studies lessons were reinforced by using clay or playdough to form land masses.

Teachers encouraged journal writing on a daily basis. Creative writing, in the form of newspapers, letters, and stories, was likewise encouraged and taught. The webbing technique, by which a topic is introduced as the core concept and ideas are branched which encouraged creativity, was presented to the students as a writing strategy.

Preliminary evaluation of the program was performed by the alternative education teachers and the administrator on December 17, 1991. The alternative education teachers interviewed previous teachers of their present students. The purpose was to substantiate or refute impressions of the student's work style and behavior. Suggestions for techniques to help the child were discussed. The time from August to December without teacher input was to allow the alternative education teachers to develop their own impressions of the children and their needs.

Questions asked of the teacher who had the child in class in the previous year were:

1. How well did the student grasp new concepts presented?
2. What was the dominant learning style?
3. What, if anything triggered inappropriate behavior?
4. How adept was the child at dealing with social and academic problems?
5. Were parents supportive and involved in their child's school work?
6. Was the administrator supportive and available?
7. How well did the child acclimatize in a classroom setting?

The guidance staff was also interviewed. The questions asked were:

1. How supportive were the teachers last year, in your opinion, in implementing suggested interventions for students with learning problems?

2. How much more involved would you like to be with the alternative education class?

3. What suggestions for parent follow-up would you give to strengthen the guidance program?

Through the grade level chairpersons, the teachers were asked to provide input based on their experiences with the transitional or at risk concept. All 34 teachers agreed the program was viable, much needed, and effective. The two classroom aides also responded positively to the program. The three alternative education teachers were enthusiastic but critical of mainstreaming. These suggestions for effective mainstreaming of alternative education children were analyzed. Teachers expressed concerns over tracking of students at risk from year to year. Paralleling the curriculum to the grade level objectives to efficiently mainstream students was also an issue. Other suggestions included varied assessment and evaluation procedures and the ranking of candidates who qualify for the program.

The 51 students were likewise surveyed by teachers. Students were asked to generate a class list by consensus which prioritized student interests. The topics most popular were cars, dinosaurs, sports, reptiles, and animals. Their interests, needs, and strengths were used to develop the whole language units.

In January 1992, each teacher was evaluated as per contract requirements. Hernando County uses the Florida Performance Measurement

System (FPMS) model. The FPMS documents teacher behaviors in the following domains of teaching: planning, instructional organization and development, management of student conduct, evaluation and testing, presentation of subject matter communication to include verbal and non-verbal. The purpose is not only for evaluation according to the contract, but to provide feedback to the teacher. The teaching behaviors employed by the alternative education teachers were of consideration in assessing the strengths of the teacher. Also noted was the teacher's communication skills with children at risk.

Effective teaching indicators were tallied and shared with the teachers. Lesson plans and observations documented the full use of mathematics manipulatives and the whole language concept in the teaching of lessons. Student-teacher observation documented enthusiasm, interest increased time on task behaviors, varied instruction, and frequent individual contact by the teachers and the aides. Teachers and aides were provided feedback on their strengths and weaknesses.

On February 22, 1992, a professor from the University of Florida presented effective tools with which to integrate mathematics strategies into the whole language concept. Much emphasis was placed on the use of a variety of manipulatives and cooperative learning groups to teach a concept. Discovery learning and problem solving techniques were addressed. All teachers participated in this staff development activity. This resulted in the teachers incorporating the new techniques into their lesson plans.

On March 1, 1992, a professor from the University of South Florida guided the staff through the Gregorc Style Delineator, which is designed to

pinpoint a dominant mind style to better understand how one deals with life. The four characteristic styles are: concrete sequential; abstract sequential; concrete random; and abstract random. Styles were described in Chapter 4. The teachers were analyzed as to which learning style they possessed. If the learning style of a child is different from that of the teacher, friction could result and become an obstacle to effective communication.

On March 22, 1992, a professor at the University of South Florida presented a workshop on communication techniques for all teachers. These techniques were designed for use with parents in a conference setting to enhance student self-esteem, and with colleagues in professional exchanges. Emphasis was on listening skills, body language, paraphrasing and interpretation. Teachers were made aware of key principles to effective communication. They expressed concern that they had not been aware of these principles prior to parent conferences in October.

A series of mini-workshops for parents were held once a month from October through April. These workshops were held on the first Monday of each month at 7:00 p.m. The themes of the workshops are listed.

Month	Topic	Focus	Percentage of Attendance
October	Who is at risk?	Characteristics of the child at risk	30%
November	What is the school's role and responsibility?	The structure and emphasis of the alternative education programs	10%
January	What is the parents' role and responsibility?	Support and self-esteem, behavior, and contract tips	43%

February	What county services are available?	Local supporting agencies	39%
March	Parent support teams?	Parent to parent network	55%
April	How to effectively mainstream and keep child at risk interested in school.	Articulation and assimilation into a regular classroom future concerns.	43%

Average parent participation was 30%. Alternative education teachers, guidance counselors, and administrators presented the sessions. There was an informal question and answer period after the 30 minute session. Teachers, guidance personnel, and administrators were available to respond to concerns or elicit suggestions for program improvement. To emphasize the need for personal communication, the parent survey was not sent. Teachers opted, instead, to enlist individual parent responses to their own child's progress in the program. Attendance records at staffings, workshops, and volunteer hours were compiled. Ninety percent of the parents attended staffings of their child. In these staffings, the guidance counselor, teacher, and psychologist reviewed the IEP and provided suggestions for improving achievement and/or behavior. The 51 parents spent a total of 928 hours volunteering in the classroom.

A parent resource room was established. The curriculum assistant, media specialist, and guidance personnel were instrumental in obtaining a wide range of materials to include parenting books, supplemental materials, and agency referral procedures, as well as other current literature.

In May 1992, academic achievement was documented in the Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills (CTBS) and student portfolios documented skill mastery and development. Teachers developed pre- and posttests, and these were included, as well as behavior observation logs. For

documentation purposes of the project, these are presented in Chapter 6. The actual scores and documentation will be discussed and compared with the regular student.

Report cards were redesigned to reflect the whole language curriculum. Students were evaluated in basic areas using terms such as mastery of skills, working on skills, or skills not yet achieved. A separate narrative section was included for individualized reporting. Weekly logs and communications were sent to parents. Positive behavior contracts were used for discipline plans instead of the usual assertive discipline which emphasizes consequences for actions (Appendix I). There were no discipline referrals in the office for the school year 1991-1992 in grades four and five. There were four office discipline referrals in grade three. There were three students absent over ten days in grade three, ten students absent in grade four over ten days, and six students absent over ten days in grade five.

At a meeting on June 3, 1992, the I Team identified and assigned students into the 1992-1993 alternative education classes. One hundred eighty-nine children having problems with successful learning experiences were brought to child study during 1991-1992. There was at least one alternative education teacher present at the meetings to document and evaluate the potential at risk or transitional placement. Notes were reviewed by the alternative education teachers. Input was sought from classroom teachers who submitted students with special needs based on a newly adopted county ASTROS statement of eligibility criteria form (Appendix J). Rankings were assigned to students to determine placement for the next year. Parents of potential students were notified, and an open house was hosted by the

alternative education teachers. Individual parent conferences were held with the teacher and guidance counselor at the parent's convenience. Parents signed students into the 1992-1993 program.

In a meeting on June 5, 1992, classroom aides were asked for input about students' participation and behavior, since they assisted the special classroom teachers in music, art, and physical education. In this capacity, they could observe students under classroom conditions different from the alternative education classroom. Observations of behaviors and interactions among students and teachers were discussed.

Staff input was sought in the areas of mainstreaming and identification of future students at risk. At a grade level meeting on June 6, 1992, the chairpersons of each grade level were asked to survey their teachers for strengths and weaknesses of the program. The responses were reviewed by the alternative educational teachers. Guidance personnel's concerns and plans for group and individual sessions were presented to the grade level chairpersons at the same meeting.

The fifth grade alternative education and regular classroom teachers met with the sixth grade teachers from the middle school. Promotion requirements were reviewed. At the same time, the major components of the true middle school concept were discussed. The teaming of sixth grade teachers was a different structure from the elementary school plan. A list of students recommended for the middle school alternative programs was reviewed, and teachers discussed the best placement for these new sixth graders.

In August 1992, data were compiled and prepared for the final report. Analysis of data and further applications were considered by the writer.

Summary of Accomplishments

The coordination of the identification process was one of the major accomplishments of this program. The improved referral form screened and identified students having problems. A systematic procedure ensured the input of teachers, parents, and support personnel. This procedure individualized Child Study, I Team parenting intervention modules, and staff development. The ranking aspect of identification established a comparison and evaluation step in deciding on a child who may be in need of special services. This child also was considered as possibly succeeding in this type of classroom environment. The objective ranking by child study notes, teacher observations, and appropriateness of placement was decided by a collaborative group of professionals who dealt with the child at risk.

The selection plan encouraged parent support and insisted on involvement. Placement into the program was only by parent permission. The parent network moved the program outside of the school community. Parent support was, therefore, not confined to the specific program at Floyd, but could extend to the county or beyond.

The planned interventions emphasized various teacher behaviors to effect a conducive classroom climate that encouraged student success. The interventions were applicable to all classrooms. Teachers shared successes, and peer coaching emerged as a result of the workshops. Skills, such as the use of particular strategies in communication, were helpful in parent-teacher

conferences. Teacher confidence appeared to be enhanced, resulting in higher school morale and a happier work environment. Workshops were applicable to any classroom.

With parent support, student growth, both academically and socially, was evident. The self-discipline helped students try new learning experiences with confidence. The self-esteem modules encouraged students to take risks without fear of failure. The individual plans removed competition and were geared to build on individual student strengths. Smaller teacher-to-student ratios enabled the teachers to individualize lesson plans and also stimulated a better learning environment and assured successes daily.

Chapter 6

Evaluation of Results and Process

Practicum outcome and processes used in achieving them

Terminal Objective 1. Teachers will increase their use of mathematics and whole language techniques in the classroom, as evidenced by lesson plans, field observations using the Florida Performance Measurement System (FPMS) and student-teacher observation and interviews.

Results of Terminal Objective 1. By comparing teacher lesson plans from the first evaluation performed in November by the administrator and elementary curriculum specialist, teachers increased the use of mathematics manipulatives in concept building and lesson presentation. Plans were presented in units designed by groups of teachers. Care was taken to instruct students using visual, auditory, and kinesthetic modalities to ensure students would be taught to their learning style. Whole language techniques, such as integrating reading, language arts, science and social studies into the main theme, were used. These themes were based on student interests and skills. Individual pacing was easily addressed. For example, if a child needed enrichment activities, additional support materials were made available. A slower paced child was given material to reinforce the basics.

Computers were used by the children to increase retention and reinforce knowledge. All activities were child centered and developmentally appropriate. Some students were mainstreamed into the regular classroom in the areas of their academic strengths for part of the day. Validation for the

attainment of the objective was through the FPMS teacher observation instrument and by frequent monitoring of the class (Table 5).

Table 5

Integration of Mathematics and Whole Language Curriculum According to Pre- and Post Observations Using FPMS

Lesson Presentation	34 Classroom Teachers		3 Alternative Education Teachers	
	Fall 1991	Spring 1992	Fall 1991	Spring 1992
Auditory by Percent	80%	38%	50%	40%
Visual Cues by Percent	15%	32%	30%	30%
Kinesthetic by Percent	5%	30%	20%	30%
Average Daily Computer Time in Minutes	35	45	40	50
Average Daily Cooperative Learning Time in Minutes	0	30	15	40

Teachers became more confident, and the themes were developed with the input of the students and other team members. This peaked student interest and commitment to the class. The objective was achieved as evidenced by the assessment observation results and interviews with the teachers.

Terminal Objective 2. As a result of parent workshops, parents of targeted students will report they have used specific behaviors at home to reinforce the school plan. This will be measured by a survey. Support will

also be measured by attendance at staffings, parent workshops, and volunteer classroom hours.

Results of Terminal Objective 2. Parent support and involvement was a key component if this terminal objective were to be met. From the beginning of the intervention, parents were included in the child study referral process, preplacement meetings where qualifications for the alternative education program were discussed, and when students were assigned to the alternative education class. Parents were sent written communications, were telephoned, or were invited to personal conferences. They were encouraged to volunteer in the classroom and to attend work sessions focusing on the child at risk.

Validation of the objective was by teacher communication logs, volunteer hours, and parenting classes sign-in sheets (Table 6). Parent surveys indicated weaknesses of the program as being teacher to parent communication and having no prior knowledge of the program before the alternative education team recommended placement for their child. Strengths identified were the subject area content, teacher delivery and the results they saw reflected in their own child.

Table 6

Parental Participation of Alternative Education Students

	Program Staffing	Parenting Workshop	Classroom Volunteering
Grade 3	90%	30%	90%
Grade 4	95%	28%	83%
Grade 5	97%	32%	90%

Side effects of this objective were that parents began networking, which encouraged participation in parent meetings. Information and successes were relayed from one parent to another. Another unpredictable benefit was the contribution of these parents to the total school accountability process by working with staff and other parents to make a difference in their child's educational experience. Florida, in a plan for moving into the 21st century, has adopted Blueprint 2000, which make counties and individual schools accountable for educating their children. The parent involvement encouraged by the alternative education teachers resulted in strengthening their contribution to school accountability. The objective was met.

Terminal Objective 3. Academic achievement of the target students will increase through mastery learning evidenced by one or more of the following areas: standardized test scores, student portfolios, teacher made pre- and posttests, and observation logs done by teachers and guidance personnel evaluations which included the affective domain.

Results of Terminal Objective 3. Academic achievement was a most important objective. Students were given the space to create, elaborate, demonstrate, and evaluate what they learned. Copies of behavior contracts used in the alternative education classroom were distributed to support teachers for their information. Strategies were developed for meeting the educational needs of the child at risk. Table 7 shows student growth in the affective domain. Students increased in classwork produced, homework completed, and reduction in behavior contracts.

Table 7

Attitude Growth of Alternative Education Students

Grade	Classwork Produced		Homework Completed		Behavior Contracts	
	Fall 1991	Spring 1992	Fall 1991	Spring 1992	Fall 1991	Spring 1992
3	10%	60%	70%	74%	47%	40%
4	12%	62%	81%	80%	44%	28%
5	15%	58%	77%	78%	28%	11%

Validation was in the form of standardized test results, portfolios, pre- and posttests, journals, observation logs, hands-on, and open ended experiences. Table 8, which follows, shows academic growth of the alternative education students according to grade level, and the CTBS, criterion-referenced teacher tests, and portfolio assessment (Appendix K).

Table 8

Comparison Data of Alternative Education Students on the CTBS, Criterion-Referenced Testing, and Portfolio Assessment

	Scored Above National Mean 1991 CTBS	Scored Above National Mean 1992 CTBS	Scored Below National Mean 1991 CTBS	Scored Below National Mean 1992 CTBS	Gains in Criterion Referenced Testing	Growth By Portfolio Assessment
Grade 3	27%	53%	60%	27%	98%	90%
Grade 4	4%	22%	50%	56%	95%	92%
Grade 5	17%	61%	61%	33%	94%	83%
Average	16%	45%	57%	39%	96%	88%

Process Objective 1. The I Team will create an assessment process that will identify children as at risk as measured by a specific checklist. This process will include an entry-exit plan, specific criteria for assessing appropriate learning levels and evaluating the child's success in the classroom. Effectiveness was measured by increased attendance, reduced discipline referrals and increased achievement.

Results of Process Objective 1. The checklist compiled by the alternative education teachers included factors of achievement, previous strategies, absentee rate, socioeconomic status, discipline record, aptitude, the need for extra remediation over and above normal assistance and teacher recommendations (Appendix B). This was the first source of referral data used. The next phase involved child study referral, suggested interventions, testing, and evaluation of success using assessment by the I Team.

These phases were followed by a ranking process by the I Team to determine if the student should be in an alternative education class. If it was believed that the child should be placed in the alternative class, parent contact was needed. The next step was for the guidance counselor to arrange a parent staffing. Parents were given an overview of the alternative education class and an opportunity to observe a class in session. After parent consent and placement, the teacher then evaluated the child based on the reports of the I Team and developed an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for the child. Exit plans included, but were not limited to, partial or total mainstreaming and level changes for subject areas. Criteria used for grade level mainstreaming were the mastery of curriculum skills and objectives by the students and not grade-level mastery. Individual plans extended learning by addressing

academic strengths and were used for measurement of this objective. The IEPs were correlated to skills and curriculum objectives.

IEPs were correlated to skills and curriculum objectives.

Process Objective 2. Alternative education teachers will streamline the curriculum presented to the identified students. They will teach these identified students using the whole language approach, high intensity delivery with emphasis on self-esteem. IEPs for each child at risk were developed. Teachers developed learning activities appropriate for each child as measured by a review of student cumulative folders and teacher lesson plans. These plans showed evidence of whole language presentations, emphasis on self-esteem and other effective strategies for children with specific needs (i.e. manipulatives, computers, active-cooperative learning).

Results of Process Objective 2. Themes of the alternative education classroom were centered around student interests. A guidance counselor visited the classroom daily to reinforce the behavior contracts. Positive action plans were followed with emphasis on self-esteem. Individual education plans were designed for each student based on past mastery of skills. Care was taken to reteach those skills not mastered so the knowledge base was secure for building the spiral curriculum.

Aides were utilized to reduce the student-teacher ratio and provide more assistance. Parent volunteers were also used in this manner. This objective was developed over a period of time and achieved as the lesson plans revealed. Every educational plan was tailored to the individual child. Materials were ordered to supplement the curriculum, and computers were an integral part of the plan.

Process Objective 3. An intervention team which includes the alternative education teachers, school guidance counselor, school psychologist, school social worker, elementary specialist, and principal will meet on a weekly basis to review records of potential candidates of the alternative education program referred by the Child Study team.

Results of Process Objective 3. The I Team met on Wednesday of each week from January through June, with the exception of holidays. The weekly Child Study team meetings were also held on Wednesdays. Personnel involved in the Child Study teams include the principal, counselor, curriculum resource teacher, specific learning disabilities teacher, speech pathologist, classroom teacher, school social worker, school psychologist, and parent. Since these meetings were also attended by the personnel who comprised the I Team, they were able to assess each child brought for referral. The purpose of the monthly I Team meeting was to review notes and begin a general ranking of students for assignment to the next school year. The agenda format for the I Team meeting was as follows:

1. Analyze student data from the Child Study team.
2. Describe and discuss academic and social concerns.
3. Review proposed interventions.
4. Obtain information from the classroom teachers
5. Establish guidance groups

The objective was modified to be more efficiently organized by the collaboration of the key players. The team became very familiar with students with special needs and could develop intervention plans efficiently.

Process Objective 4. All teachers will participate in workshops on learning strategies, designing Individual Education Plans, effective communication, and learning styles of students and teachers.

Results of Process Objective 4. Forty teachers including 34 classroom, 3 alternative education, a music, art, and physical education teacher participated in a workshop on learning strategies presented by a guest professor of education. The same forty teachers participated in a session on how to design educational plans for individual students based on their specific needs. Forty-eight of 53 teachers attended a presentation on effective communication. Fifty of the 53 teachers took part in the Gregorc leaning style workshop. A pre- and posttest were given, and inservice points for staff development were awarded. Forty-seven teachers showed growth in their knowledge of communication and learning styles. The workshops were well received and many positive comments were listed on the evaluation summary critique.

Process Objective 5. Parent support and involvement will be incorporated strategically into each phase of the project with the goal of creating a commitment of the family unit to help the child. Parents will be used as volunteers in the classroom. A parent resource room with appropriate supplemental literature will be available. Parenting classes will be scheduled to encourage sharing of ideas and networking.

Results of Process Objective 5. Validation of the objective was by teacher communication logs and signed written contracts. Parents volunteered a total of 928 hours in the three classrooms during the 1991-1992 school year, in contrast to the 123 hours during the 1990-1991 school year.

A parent resource room located in the administration building was established. Special programs personnel, the curriculum assistant, and media specialist were instrumental in obtaining the necessary materials for the library. A bulletin board, typewriter, and copy machine were provided. Parents who were enrolling students or waiting for a staffing were directed to the resource room. A side effect was that a pattern of communication was established with parents which included both positive, as well as negative, information about the student.

Reflections on the Solution Strategy

The main areas of data gathering included test scores (CTBS), portfolios, observation logs and communication logs to document achievement. Volunteer hours and parent surveys validated parent support. Lesson plans and teacher assessments (FPMS) verified the inclusion of learned teacher strategies. The original group of 51 students was reduced due to the high mobility of the school population.

A weakness in the gathering of data was in the portfolio assessment. This type of individualized subjective data is difficult to use in comparing one student with another. Due to the subjective nature, the evaluator is the key. Another weakness in the documentation of the affective domain is that both attitude and cognitive abilities are predictive, but not easily controlled, in data collection.

The parent involvement component, to be successful, is dependent on many factors not under the direct control of the writer. The strengths of the

project are in the commitment of parents and teachers to help the child make a difference.

Implications of Outcomes and Processes

Several areas of the school community have been affected by this project. The Director of Student Services is presently in the process of using the conceptual model for a countywide training program for alternative education teachers. Also under consideration is the application of this procedure to identify students at risk county wide. The school program for students at risk was recognized by the state and given an Exemplary School Award in dealing with students at risk. This school was also awarded the Golden School Award for volunteer hours, and a third award was presented to the school as a Red Carpet School for a parent-friendly community. The teacher selected was as a finalist for the Hernando County Teacher of the Year and serves as a member of the Academy of Teachers.

The Supervisor of Research, Evaluation, and Testing for Hernando County analyzed the testing procedures of students at risk in relation to using these results in school accountability. The evaluation of students' progress needs to be an accurate profile. The alternative assessment procedures used parallel the newly adopted state philosophy and may be a more meaningful evaluation tool.

A committee has been developed to investigate alternative assessment, and the results of this project will be shared with this committee to develop a report card. The School Board has approved the whole language report card as a pilot in alternative education, special programs, and kindergarten

through second grade. The Elementary Supervisor was instrumental in assisting the school to develop a report for parents which reflected the new program. Whole language implementation used by the alternative education teachers and by the regular teachers coordinated total school efforts with the integration of the curriculum. The pre-K curriculum, which is an early readiness program based on the High Scope Program, directly correlates with the alternative education goals (1989).

Chapter 7

Decisions on Future of Intervention

Maintain, Modify, Abandon?

Phase one of the project, which is concerned with the early identification of third, fourth, and fifth grade students potentially at risk, should be modified for use in identifying children at risk as early as prekindergarten. Students entering school from another district also should be assessed for special needs. Since Florida has a transient population, many new students are not identified soon enough.

The present program offerings at John D. Floyd Elementary, which include alternative education classes for grades two, three, four, and five should be continued. The coordination of preschool kindergarten programs would insure the readiness of children beginning public school.

In order to provide the most appropriate educational environment for students at risk, the interventions suggested in Phase Two of the project should be considered. These interventions may be applied effectively to all students. Teaching should be individualized to afford the highest level of achievement for all students. Positive communication about the program should be a priority. Any negative comments toward students (at risk or any students, for that matter) by students, staff, or teachers need to be addressed. The communication of program strengths and positive results should be publicized and celebrated.

Programs to which results from this project may apply are ungraded classrooms, continuous progress, or year-round education. The parental communication components of this paper would strengthen any school's goals.

Additional Applications

The current issue in education is the training of university students preparing to become certified in teaching. University programs should be expanded to allow more field time in teaching students at risk. The focus would be on using intervention techniques for students with special needs.

Also, a teacher training model should be available for all teachers presently employed. Teachers would be taught current educational trends and techniques to enhance the total school program. The modules would be taught by master teachers and consultants. Modules could be adapted for presentation to students in the field of education. Teachers could develop units and guidance procedures in teams and use cooperative learning groups to take advantage of each teacher's contribution.

Parenting workshops could involve total school populations, yet be flexible enough to allow for such groups which would address specific needs and areas of concern. Parents should be involved with teachers in the smooth articulation of students from one school to another and from grade to grade. Since the list of students potentially at risk would be completed in April, students and parents would have opportunities to observe the alternative classrooms in session. This would help to prepare both parents and students for the class.

Dissemination of information about benefits

A description of the alternative education classroom is currently being developed to provide parents, community, and other educators with information about dealing with the child at risk. Scheduled observations of alternative education classrooms in action make teachers, parents, and visitors aware of the strengths of the program. Parents networking with parents from other schools would provide support for parents in trying new strategies at home. Audio-visual presentations to professional groups of educators and local business associations about the program would be positive public relations for the school and classroom.

Recommendations

Careful identification of students potentially at risk should be made by professional educators after gathering pertinent data and discussing the implication of the specific student. Since all students come from different backgrounds with special unique needs, a thorough review must occur. Teachers of the alternative education program must be positive, enthusiastic, and knowledgeable. Individualized instruction with a wealth of basic supplemental materials should be provided. The structure of the classroom, the hours of contact time, teacher-to-student ratio, and behavior plans are factors in the success of the program and must be given priority.

The early identification of students at risk is necessary to keep the student from giving up. Specific interventions for students at risk are necessary for their academic success. A committed teacher, aide, and parent do make a difference. The continuation of the alternative program for

unsuccessful students is essential to assuring that all students have the opportunity to graduate from high school.

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Appendices

CRITERIA FOR COMPUTER-GENERATED EARLY IDENTIFICATION OF AT-RISK STUDENTS

1. **Retention:** One retention or more - the greatest single indicator of at-risk students
2. **ITBS:** Scoring below the 25th percentile in reading, language or math (the last administration)
3. **SSATI:** Mastered fewer than three standards in reading, four in writing, or five in math
4. **SSATII:** Scored below 700 on math or communication
5. **Grades:** Failed two or more courses during the previous semester
6. **Absences:** Ten or more absences for the previous semester (an absence reported for any one period on report cards)
7. **Tardies:** Ten or more tardies during the previous semester (elementary only)
8. **Transfers:** More than two transfers during the last two years (including transfers to Alternative Education)
9. **Alternative Education:** Assigned to Alternative Education during the previous school year

ADDITIONAL CRITERIA
AVAILABLE THROUGH SCHOOL RECORDS

1. Students who have experienced little academic success in their school careers:

   a. failure to demonstrate mastery of 80 percent of assessed standards
   b. low ability as assessed by psychological examination but do not qualify for Exceptional Student Education (e.g. 70-85 IQ)
   c. low achievement as evidenced by reading two or more years below grade level
   d. over age by two years or more for their grade level

2. Child abuse and/or neglect

3. Students with drug involvement (parent or student):

   a. students referred to substance abuse program
   b. students who have been voluntarily admitted to a drug program
   c. parents who request assistance

4. Students who are pregnant

5. Students displaying disinterest in school:

   a. teacher referral to counselor and/or administrator
   b. marked change in grades, test scores, or attitude
   c. working far below ability/achievement levels
   d. poor peer relations
   e. low self-esteem
   f. lack of participation in activities in or out of school
   g. lack of motivation
   h. physical size (small or large for group)
   i. generally poor adjustment to school

6. Students who have been adjudicated delinquent or dependent (delinquent - committed a crime; dependent - status offense such as runaway, truant, or ungovernable)

Alternative Program
Statement of Eligibility

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF HERNANDO COUNTY, FLORIDA
ASTROS
Statement of Eligibility

Date: _____

Student Name: _____ Student I.D. #: _____

Grade: _____ Date of Birth: _____ School _____

To be eligible for consideration, a student must display one or more of the following characteristics: (Check all that apply.)

☐ 1. Has poor academic achievement as identified by (a) failure of two (2) or more academic subjects or (b) retained at least one year.

List subjects failed/grade and/or year retained: _____

_____

☐ 2. Was previously assigned into the PREP preventive strategies. _____

Give grade level/year(s): _____

_____

_____

☐ 3. Has excessive absences as indicated by an attendance pattern of 10% or more absence per semester or 10% or more absence for the previous year.

Number of days absent current year to date ____ or last year ____.

☐ 4. Is performing below expectations as measured by a comparison between current academic performance (9 week grades) and previous standardized achievement test.

Describe: _____

_____

_____

☐ 5. Requires attention and help beyond that which the basic instructional program can provide as measured by unsatisfactory performance in Chapter I Reading and Math and/or other compensatory remedial programs.

Describe: _____

_____

_____

☐ 6. Has teacher or other school personnel recommendation which demonstrates a pattern of late or incomplete assignments; lack of confidence; low self-esteem.

Describe: _____

_____

_____

☐ 7. There is a continued need for the child to be placed in this program in order to ensure success.

Documentation for ALL categories is attached.

Completed by: _____ Date _____

Distribution:

Appendix D

OPPORTUNITY MATRIX

DIMENSIONS	1	2	3	4	5
1. Planning and Organizing				•	
2. Management Control					•
3. Use of Delegation				•	
4. Written Communication Skills			•		
5. Oral Communication Skills			•		
6. Problem Analysis					•
7. Judgment					•
8. Political Behavior					•
9. Decisiveness			•		
10. Risk Taking				•	
11. Creativity					•
12. Educational Perspective				•	
13. Persistence					•
14. Initiative					•
15. Stress Tolerance				•	
16. Group Leadership			•		
17. Individual Leadership				•	
18. Adaptability				•	
19. Flexibility				•	
20. Considerateness				•	

Parent Current Survey Status
(1991)

JOHN D. FLOYD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

3139 Dumont Avenue • Spring Hill, Florida 34609 • Phone (904) 686-1901

"RISING TO NEW HEIGHTS"

April 22, 1991

Dear Parents,

In order to more effectively serve your child I am conducting a survey to strengthen the Alternative Education Programs at Floyd. Your cooperation in filling out and returning it by April 25 is appreciated.

1. Prior knowledge about the placement procedures before my child was to be assigned.

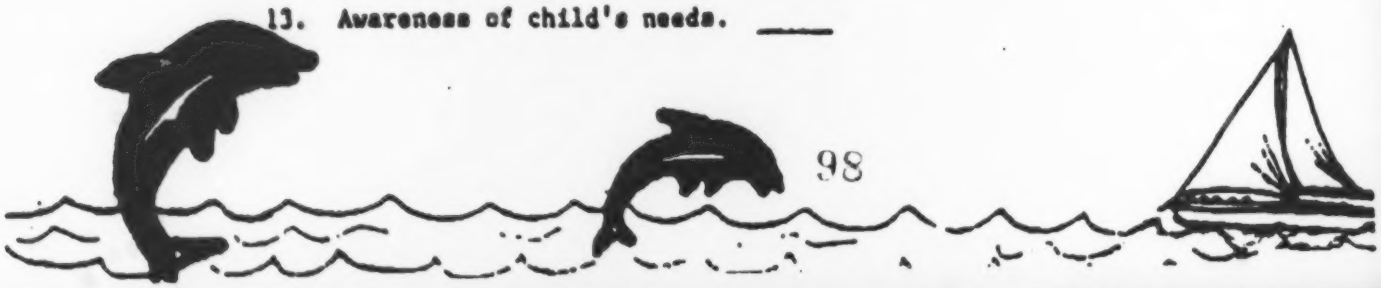
   _____Well informed _____No prior information

Please rate the following on a scale of 1 to 5. (1=little knowledge; 5=very knowledgeable)

2. Knowledge about curriculum. _____
3. Knowledge of objectives. _____
4. Parent contact and communication after placement. _____
5. Success of child after placement. _____
6. Follow-up of evaluation of progress. _____
7. Parent input. _____
8. Exit review necessary. _____

Please rate the following on a scale of 1 to 5. (1=improvement needed; 5=more than adequate)

9. Your child's achievement since enrolled in program. _____
10. Communication with teacher. _____
11. Communication with school. _____
12. Classroom materials and equipment. _____
13. Awareness of child's needs. _____



Please rate the following on a scale of 1 to 5. (1-improvement needed; 5-more than adequate)

14. Counseling program. ____

15. Aide and tutor success. ____

16. Overall rating of program. ____

17. Child's self esteem. ____

Thank you for your cooperation in helping to make John D. Floyd Elementary School #1.

Sincerely,

Janet Yungmann
Principal

tm

Teacher Survey (1991)

JOHN D. FLOYD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

June 4, 1991

MEMORANDUM

TO: Faculty and Staff

FROM: Janet Yungmann, Principal

RE: Alternative Education Evaluation

Please take a few minutes to respond to the following questions. Return to Mrs. Senior by 3:00 p.m. June 10. Thank you for your time.

Please check the appropriate box.

Classroom Teacher ☐ Alternative Education Teacher ☐ Other Support ☐

1. Curriculum is presented too fast a pace. _____Yes _____No

   Too much mastery is expected by students too early in their schooling. _____Yes _____No

   Curriculum requirements are too stringent. _____Yes _____No

   Most children show frustration in achievement. _____Yes _____No

Comments_____

2. Guidelines are clear for a teacher to recommend a student for Alternative Education.

   _____Yes _____No Comments_____

3. The definition of an at-risk student is clear. _____Yes _____No

Comments_____

4. Criteria for the identification of students for Alternative Education is spelled out.

   _____Yes _____No Comments_____

5. To your knowledge, the Alternative Education program is effective academically as presented at Floyd. _____Yes _____No

Comments_____

6. To your knowledge, the Alternative Education program is effective with respect to the affective domain. _____Yes _____No

Comments_____

7. Mainstreaming of students is the main goal of the program. _____Yes _____No
   If not, what do you feel is the main goal. _____

8. Follow up to students in at-risk program is: _____Very Good _____Adequate _____Haphazar

9. Please rate the following:

   Inservice in the at-risk child. _____Adequate _____Not adequate

Comments_____

   Materials provided. _____Adequate _____Not adequate

Comments_____

   Supplies provided. _____Adequate _____Not adequate

Comments_____

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Appendix F, Cont.

Curriculum. _____Adequate _____Not adequate
Comments_____

Evaluation procedures. _____Adequate _____Not adequate
Comments_____

Effectiveness of Child Study Team. _____Adequate _____Not adequate
Comments_____

Parent receptiveness. _____Adequate _____Not adequate
Comments_____

Guidance receptiveness and help. _____Adequate _____Not adequate
Comments_____

10. Specific criteria for placement should include:

a._____

b._____

c._____

d._____

e._____

f._____

11. Which of the following do you use to some extent?

_____Cooperative learning

_____Discipline plan

_____Rewards

_____Extension activities

_____Vocational programs

12. Early identification and placement should begin:
(choose one)

_____Pre-K
_____Kindergarten
_____First
_____Second
_____Third
_____Fourth
_____Fifth

13. Curriculum concerns_____

_____

14. Mainstream concerns_____

_____

15. Evaluation concerns_____

_____

tm

Parent Evaluation Survey (1991)

JOHN D. FLOYD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

June 4, 1991 3139 Dumont Avenue • Spring Hill, Florida 34609 • Phone (904) 686-1901

Dear Parents,

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of the Alternative Education Program, I am gathering responses from parents. Please cooperate by completing and returning this questionnaire by June 6.

1. Prior knowledge about the placement procedures for my child to be assigned to ASTROS was adequate. ____Yes ____No
Comments_____

2. Knowledgeable about curriculum. ____Yes ____No
Comments_____

3. Learning objectives for my child are clear. ____Yes ____No
Comments_____

4. Parent contact and communication after placement has been adequate.
____Yes ____No Comments_____

5. My child has experienced success in school after placement.
____Yes ____No Comments_____

6. The teacher has given me feedback on my child's progress.
____Yes ____No Comments_____

7. My input and comments have been used by the staff. ____Yes ____No
Comments_____

8. Parent exit review is necessary for me to know where my child stands.
____Yes ____No Comments_____

9. My child has achieved academically since enrolled in the program.
____Yes ____No Comments_____

10. Communication with the teacher has been more than sufficient.
____Yes ____No Comments_____

11. Communication with school has been adequate. ____Yes ____No
Comments_____

12. Classroom materials and equipment have been relevent and sufficient.
____Yes ____No Comments_____

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Alternative Education Program Questionnaire Page 2

13.My child's needs have been met. _____Yes _____No
Comments_____

_____

14.The counseling program has made an impact on my child. _____Yes _____No
Comments_____

_____

15.The aide has been helpful and supportive. _____Yes _____No
Comments_____

_____

16.My child's self esteem has improved. _____Yes _____No
Comments_____

_____

17.The overall rating of the program is _____

_____

Of these areas, which would you like restructured. Please check all areas which apply.

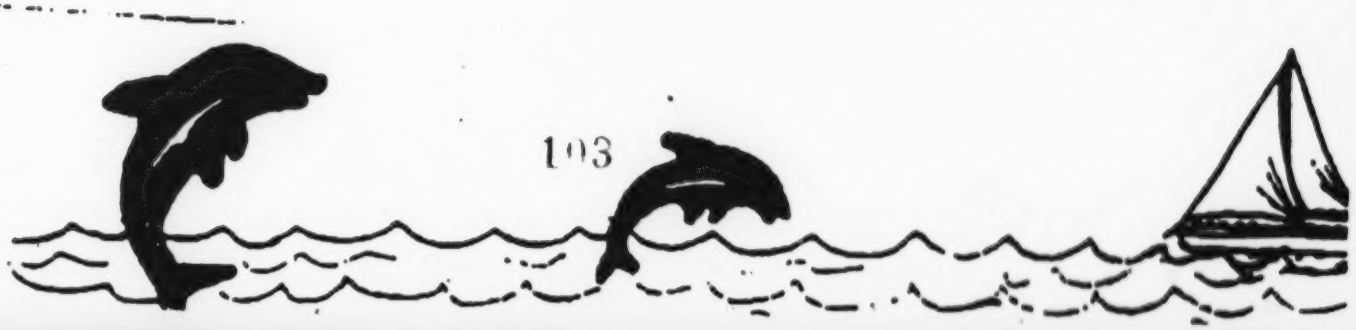
_____ 1.Curriculum presentation including guidance.
_____ 2.Individual learning plans of student.
_____ 3.Identification procedure of students.
_____ 4.Entry and exit procedures of program.
_____ 5.Parental awareness and involvement.

Thank you for your cooperation in helping to make John D. Floyd Elementary School #1.

Sincerely,

Janet Yungmann
Principal

tm



Appendix H

Astros Checklist

JOHN D. FLOYD ELEMENTARY

ASTROS CHECKLIST

Student Name_____

Directions: Please check all areas that apply.

____ Standardized test scores below 50th percentile

____ Previous failure in a grade level

____ More than ten absences in previous years

____ Language Arts grade below average for prior year

____ Mathematics grade below average for prior year

____ Discipline record in main office

____ Qualifies for free/reduced lunch

____ Qualifies for special program

Specify _____

____ Teacher recommendation

Comments _____

_____

____ Child study records attached

_____

Educator initiating referral

Behavior Contract

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF HERNANDO COUNTY, FLORIDA

ASTROS PROGRAM

ELEMENTARY STUDENT CONTRACT

School _____

Student _____ _____
Student Number

I, _____, agree to be placed into the ASTROS Program. This class is for students who want to improve attendance, grades, and/or behavior.

I understand that:

1. I must cooperate with the administration, counselor and all teachers.
2. I will be expected to attend school daily unless I am ill. The counselor or teacher may check with my parent(s) regarding all absences.
3. I will work to improve my classwork and behavior.
4. Alternative forms of discipline will be used when possible to reduce referrals and suspensions.
5. My participation in special activities and class field trips will depend upon my behavior at school.
6. I will be expected to participate in special's classes, and that my progress and behavior may be monitored.
7. By signing this contract, I am agreeing to remain in the program for a minimum of 9 weeks.
8. Failure to cooperate with any of the above will result in my possible removal from the program.

_____ _____
Student Signature Date

_____ _____
Counselor Signature Teacher Signature

Appendix J

Astros Statement of Eligibility

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF HERNANDO COUNTY, FLORIDA

ASTROS

Statement of Eligibility

Date: _____

Student Name: _____ Student I.D. #: _____

Grade: _____ Date of Birth: _____ School _____

To be eligible for consideration, a student must display one or more of the following characteristics: (Check all that apply.)

☐ 1. Has poor academic achievement as identified by (a) failure of two (2) or more academic subjects or (b) retained at least one year.

List subjects failed/grade and/or year retained: _____

_____

☐ 2. Was previously assigned into the PREP preventive strategies. _____

Give grade level/year(s): _____

_____

_____

☐ 3. Has excessive absences as indicated by an attendance pattern of 10% or more absence per semester or 10% or more absence for the previous year.

Number of days absent current year to date ____ or last year ____.

☐ 4. Is performing below expectations as measured by a comparison between current academic performance (9 week grades) and previous standardized achievement test.

Describe: _____

_____

_____

☐ 5. Requires attention and help beyond that which the basic instructional program can provide as measured by unsatisfactory performance in Chapter I Reading and Math and/or other compensatory remedial programs.

Describe: _____

_____

_____

☐ 6. Has teacher or other school personnel recommendation which demonstrates a pattern of late or incomplete assignments; lack of confidence; low self-esteem.

Describe: _____

_____

_____

☐ 7. There is a continued need for the child to be placed in this program in order to ensure success.

Documentation for ALL categories is attached.

Completed by: _____ Date _____

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SD-SS-020 F
July 1991

Distribution:
White: Student Cum. File
Yellow: Counselor
Pink: District Student Services Director

Appendix K

Assessment Results of Grade-Three Students Enrolled in Dropout Prevention

Std #		1989-1990 NP	1989-1990 SS	1990-1991 NP	1990-1991 SS	1991-1992 NP	1991-1992 SS	Free/ Reduced	Days Absent
017702	+	61	606	37	612	23	627	NA	•
016974		25	540	3	516	NA	NA	NA	
030190		46	582	52	633	64	688	FREE	
030232	+	14	505	14	562	15	607	NA	
019352		33	557	20	579	NA	NA	FREE	
020783	+	63	609	38	613	41	660	NA	
031717		10	488	20	578	32	656	NA	
032068		NA	NA	46	625	31	643	NA	
027845		42	575	26	593	38	656	NA	
019359		31	553	43	621	31	643	FREE	
031922		15	510	24	587	29	640	NA	
017813	+	50	588	28	597	54	677	FREE	
019874		43	576	40	617	42	661	NA	
028191		63	609	31	602	58	681	NA	•
019804		55	597	58	640	NA	NA	NA	

• = Absent over ten days

+ = Discipline Referral

Appendix K

Assessment Results of Grade Four Students Enrolled in Dropout Prevention

Std #	1989-1990		1990-1991		1991-1992		Free/ Reduced	Days Absent
	NP	SS	NP	SS	NP	SS		
017835	56	638	33	647	33	675	FREE	
031590	28	597	25	633	NA	NA	NA	*
032741	NA	NA	60	684	55	701	NA	
018207	47	626	59	682	58	704	FREE	*
028216	54	636	36	653	44	690	NA	*
017892	68	653	48	670	41	686	NA	*
025454	53	634	42	661	40	685	NA	
023419	23	586	25	633	18	646	NA	*
025387	33	605	38	656	24	659	NA	
028633	43	621	45	665	56	702	REDUCED	
017761	51	632	38	655	9	617	NA	*
031864	18	575	27	637	16	640	FREE	
028867	48	628	51	673	16	640	NA	*
013574	28	597	28	639	32	673	FREE	
011392	58	640	36	650	39	684	NA	*
028922	35	609	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	*
019911	80	668	73	698	46	692	REDUCED	
017873	W/D		W/D		W/D		NA	

* = Absent over ten days

+ = Discipline Referral

Appendix K

Assessment Results of Grade-Five Students Enrolled in Dropout Prevention

Std #	1989-1990 NP	1989-1990 SS	1990-1991 NP	1990-1991 SS	1991-1992 NP	1991-1992 SS	Free/ Reduced	Days Absent
025350	W/D		W/D		W/D		NA	
026458	65	689	36	679	17	660	NA	
014530	48	695	55	709	50	707	NA	*
027512	12	620	18	645	28	681	FREE	
033047	NA	NA	12	629	22	670	NA	
017672	20	621	9	619	21	669	NA	
025510	28	639	36	675	43	700	NA	*
025513	45	666	30	670	25	676	NA	
028836	31	643	13	632	12	646	NA	
033052	NA	NA	17	644	23	673	REDUCED	*
017485	47	668	21	654	32	687	NA	
021229	NA	NA	24	660	25	677	REDUCED	*
021585	49	671	48	694	31	686	REDUCED	*
027509	54	677	40	682	45	702	NA	
017681	68	692	62	708	59	715	NA	
014516	31	644	24	660	44	701	FREE	
017376	30	642	29	669	31	686	NA	
018101	38	655	30	671	35	691	NA	*

* = Absent over ten days

+ = Discipline Referral